

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

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JESSE JAMES STRUCK THE DETECTIVE A TERRIFIC BLOW AND HE FELL PROSTRATE OVER THE TWO HANDCUFFED OUTLAWS.—(CHAPTER CCX.)

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Jesse James' Exploits.

By W. B. LAWSON.

CHAPTER CXCII.

"HE BEARS A CHARMED LIFE."

"Matters are looking very bad for you and us, Dayton. Here have we been for over six months, twenty men strong, hunting Jesse James down, surrounding him, and having him in our very clutches, and yet he escapes every time.

"It's no use; he bears a charmed life, and he'll never be taken by mortal man."

It was Marshal Browning, of Le Roy, Barton County, Missouri, who spoke.

His companion was the celebrated Western detective, Jim Dayton.

The two were followed at a short distance by six assistants of the marshal.

All were mounted on good animals and well armed.

They had been, and were at the time, hunting for Jesse James who had robbed the bank at Barton the day before and then most mysteriously disappeared.

"We've got him pretty well cornered now," replied the detective. "There's a poor chance of his escaping us, as we know he's cut off from the rest of the gang, and that Frank James is a prisoner in the Stockton jail."

"Are you quite sure that Frank is a prisoner?"

"Certainly; I saw him there myself the day before yesterday."

"That's good news, anyhow, so let us push along after Jesse. He's somewhere in that forest over there, sure,"

pointing to a low, long chain of trees about two miles away.

They had entered the wood, and were picking their way carefully, when the whole cavalcade was brought to a standstill by the sudden appearance of a stalwart and dare-devil looking rider, about twenty yards ahead of them.

"Throw up your hands, there!" came in stentorian tones from the stranger, as he held two revolvers leveled at the heads of the foremost riders.

A movement was made by those in the rear, when they had partly recovered from their sudden surprise, to draw their six-shooters, which the lonely robber immediately noticed.

"Move a hand, you infernal curs, and I'll shatter the brains of both your leaders. Throw up your hands, every mother's son of you!"

He had scarcely finished the last word, when one of them at the back leveled his revolver at the outlaw and fired.

The bullet just grazed the outlaw's cheek.

This first shot was the signal for all to empty their pistols at the daring man, who so calmly faced them.

When the smoke had cleared away, it was seen that the marshal and the detective were biting the grass, each with a bullet in his chest.

With the war-whoop of a wild Comanche, the dauntless Jesse advanced, firing on the remaining six, exclaiming:

"I'll teach you curs to monkey with Jesse James!"

The name acted like magic on the marshal's assistants. They turned tail at once, and two more of them fell beneath the highwayman's deadly aim before they got away.

Jesse James, for it was the celebrated outlaw himself, refrained from pursuing, and turned his attention to the wounded, whose horses had fled in affright.

The marshal and the detective had their shoulder-blades shattered, and were bereft of consciousness; the other two, however, were both dead.

Walking up to the two wounded men, Jesse took a good look at them, relieved them of their valuables and weapons, and the detective of a wallet of papers, which the outlaw eagerly read.

"So, my fine buck, Dayton, we meet once again, and again you are the loser.

"Let this be a lesson to you and all others to leave Jesse James alone in the future.

"Ha! According to these papers, George Best has turned traitor, and Colonel Lover has engaged you to find out where his son is.

"Well, let me tell you that his son is in my power, and will remain so until the colonel pays the ten thousand dollars I asked."

As he had been speaking, Jesse returned the papers he had taken, and noticed that the detective was recovering his senses.

He hastily pulled forth a large flask of brandy and gave both men a drink, which quickly strengthened them.

He then cleverly stopped the heavy flow of blood from the wounds.

The men had soon sufficiently recovered to be able to speak, and Jesse started in to give them a few pointers.

"I say, Dayton, as I know you are a private detective, I want to hear whether you are after me for the reward on my head, or whether you have been employed by any one else."

"I'm following you up for the sake of the reward," replied the detective.

"You lie, curse you! Tell me who you are working for, or I'll put a bullet through your brain."

As the detective did not want to let it be known that his principal object was the recovery of Colonel Lover's only son, a lad of fourteen, whom Jesse James had kidnaped out of revenge and hidden away, and as he did not know, in his insensible state, that the outlaw knew his business, he made up his mind to deny it, and answered:

"You are wrong, Jesse, I'm only working for your capture, and I'll succeed yet."

"Bold words, my buck, especially as you will be having a view of Hades in a few more minutes."

"What! Do you mean to say that you are going to kill me in cold blood?"

"Why, of course I am. I have sworn to shoot every detective who dares to trouble me or interfere with my business. So just say your prayers, for in five minutes both of you will have tasted a blue pill from this medicine chest," touching one of his revolvers.

Just as he spoke, Jesse's sharp ear had heard the tramp of many galloping steeds.

Looking up, he beheld about a dozen well-armed horsemen hastily approaching.

"Too many there for me!" he exclaimed, and, springing into his saddle again, he said:

"You two may live. No matter what people may say about me, Jesse James never shoots a helpless man.

"Tell those devils coming there that if they are not out of this region in an hour, I'll make it very lively for them. So long," and he galloped off.

And none too soon, for the new arrivals were only a couple of hundred yards away.

CHAPTER CXIII.

A SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE.

They saw Jesse's flight, and hastened to overtake him.

Jesse, however, had the fastest horse in Missouri, his famous racehorse and hurdle-flyer, Black Bess, and he soon was out-distancing his pursuers.

Still the majority of them followed on, while two remained to attend the wounded men.

On, on, went Jesse, still in sight, flakes of foam falling on the leaves from his gallant mare, which he rode so well.

After him, in hot pursuit, and putting their steeds to the uttermost, came his followers, while now and again some of them would send a rifle-shot after the rider in front, each flying wide of its mark.

Suddenly Jesse turned to the right of a clump of trees, and disappeared, as if into the bowels of the earth.

In a couple of minutes his pursuers had gained the spot where he had so mysteriously disappeared.

Search was made on every side. The tracks of his horse could be seen up to the clump of trees, which also formed a thicket of low bushes.

But here every sign of a track had vanished.

In vain did they search for miles around.

Nothing could be seen of the outlaw or his horse.

They were slowly and sadly returning whence they came, cursing their hard luck, and wondering at the manner in which Jesse had so easily avoided their pursuit, when, bang! bang! bang! rang out the tones of falling bullets from both sides of the road, while saddle after saddle was emptied.

Shots seemed to come from every side on the surprised followers of Jesse James.

They had fallen into a terrible trap.

Not a soul could be seen on whom they might retaliate.

Nothing but the drear forest on every side, out of which rained bullets as if fired by the very trees.

Shot after shot was fired on the helpless posse, and the riderless steeds galloped, frightened, away.

Seven men lay bleeding to death on the crimson-dyed green, and not a soul had yet been seen.

The remaining men put spurs to their horses and sought safety in flight.

As they did so four figures arose, two from each side, and, with yells like wild Indians, sent a volley after the flying men, but without doing any further injury.

They did not seem inclined to pursue them, for they quickly returned their revolvers to their belts and began a sharp inspection of the dead and dying.

The four who had worked such terrible havoc were Jesse and Frank James and their two wives; the two latter as fearless and intrepid as their husbands.

"What shall we do with them, Jesse?" asked Frank, alluding to the fallen men.

"Leave them where they are," curtly replied his brother.

"Don't you think there'll be danger of some of the wounded watching us and finding out the secret of the cave?"

"No. You can easily avoid that. Throw something over their heads. There'll soon be a larger posse here to look after them, and us, too, for that matter, so let us get away as soon as we've taken all they've got."

They despoiled the slain and wounded of their ammunition and valuables, taking care to cover firmly the eyes of every man who still lived.

When they had finished this part of their work, Jesse gave a shrill whistle.

A few moments later the greater part of the clump of small trees and thick undergrowth slowly opened out on each side, like the jaws of a huge alligator, disclosing a large entrance into a wide subterranean passage, into which all four sprang, when the opening closed on them, completely hiding every trace, not giving the faintest clue that such a place could exist.

Inside was a huge double chamber, capable of secreting five hundred persons or animals.

The walls were lined with weapons, ammunition, ornaments, etc.

Fresh air was supplied by numerous fissures in the rocks.

The opening was an ingenious piece of mechanism, working on pulleys.

At present the four we have known above were the only occupants.

Once inside, the two women busied themselves with preparing a meal for themselves and their husbands.

They seemed to have plenty of everything in the way of canned meats, and spirits and wine of every description.

When they had done justice to the inner man, and partaken of several large glasses of illicit whisky, Jesse wanted to know how Frank had escaped from Stockton.

"Well, you know, Jesse," replied his brother, "it will take a stronger jail than Stockton to hold a James."

"With a little trick of my own, and the generous use of some aquafortis, with which we are always well provided, I found that their prison bars were too weak to keep me there."

"As soon as I was free, I made haste this way, and apparently arrived in the nick of time, for you were havin' a pretty close call, Jesse."

"Yes, old man, you just came in time. But how about the boys; did you get any news of them?"

"Yes. I saw the Youngers, Anderson and Cummings. They are all willing to follow you, and divide the haul, as you proposed, and they will also bring a few more of the other boys along with them."

"That's right. The train is to arrive at Kansas City on the sixteenth, so that will leave us ten days clear to prepare ourselves and bag a cool hundred thousand."

"I tell you what, Frank, I'm going in for big licks now. No more couple of hundred dollar robberies for me; I play for big stakes or nothing at all."

"I'm with you, Jesse, to the end."

"I know that, Frank, old boy."

"Before, it was Jesse James against Missouri; but now, by heaven, it's Jesse James against all enemies."

The next morning Jesse James emerged from the cave and started for Barton, where he had some business to transact.

He knew every inch of the country, and made a cross-cut for Barton.

He had not proceeded far before he noticed another solitary rider coming toward him.

As the latter approached, Jesse knew him to be the traitor member of his gang, George Best.

"At last, you cur!" fiercely muttered Jesse to himself. "At last we meet, and, by heaven, I'll teach you to turn on me again."

When the new-comer recognized Jesse, he turned a sickly green, but still kept on, never for a moment thinking that his chief had an inkling of his treachery.

"Hello, Jesse!" he exclaimed, "jest bin a-thinkin' o' w're you kept yerself lately. How air yer gettin' on?"

"Oh, I'm always all right; but where have you been the last week or two?"

"Oh, I went on a spree in Missouri, an' jest got over it, and am gettin' back to ther boys."

"Seen any detectives about lately?"

"Nary a one, Jesse."

"Didn't you see Jim Dayton at all?"

George Best winced perceptibly at the sudden question, but answered, calmly:

"Never heerd o' him; who's he?"

"You lie, you sneaking hound!"

"Heaven strike me dead this minit if I'm not tellin' yer the gospel truth, Jesse!"

"Then have your wish, you black-hearted traitor, and die."

Jesse pulled out his revolver as he spoke, and leveled it at the head of the unfortunate ruffian.

The latter trembled so much that he swayed in his saddle, as he saw the murderous gleam in Jesse's eye, and noticed that he had drawn a bead on him.

"For mercy's sake, spare me!" whined the coward. "I've bin true to you, Jesse, I swear it by my soul!"

"You lie, you cowardly cur, you lie! There, take that, and——"

As Jesse was about to fire, a shot rang out, and his revolver went spinning out of his hand.

"Throw up your hands at once, or you are a dead man!" rang out, in clear, stentorian tones, from a voice but a few yards distant on the right.

Quick as a flash Jesse had snatched another revolver from his belt, and turned to the spot whence the voice came.

There stood a tall, stern-looking man pointing a revolver at his head.

It was the first time Jesse James had ever found himself at the mercy of another, for he knew the slightest movement on his part would mean immediate death from the man.

Jesse had recognized him at once.

It was the famous Western detective, Jim Dayton.

CHAPTER CXIV.

CAUGHT.

Jesse was caught this time, and well he recognized the fact.

He knew Jim Dayton to be a famous shot, and a most determined man.

He also knew that his "game was up," unless his cunning saved him.

"Move a muscle, Jesse, and I'll put a bullet through your head!"

"Drop that pistol at once, or I fire!"

Jesse looked at George Best, and saw that the latter also had a bead drawn on him.

He saw resistance was useless, and let his pistol fall.

"I give in, Dayton, you've got me this time," he said, as he meekly approached the noted detective, with his hands extended to receive the handcuffs which the detective had drawn from under his coat with the one hand, while he held a cocked revolver in the other, ready for immediate use.

Dayton watched him closely, to guard against any untoward movement on the outlaw's part.

If Jesse had any intention of treachery, he gave no sign of it, but quietly permitted himself to be handcuffed.

"Take my advice, Mr. Dayton," remarked George, "and shoot him at once, or he'll get away from you as sure as you are alive."

"No fear of that, George. Once I have the bracelets on a man's wrists, there's a poor chance of his getting away from Jim Dayton, though he be Jesse James himself."

The detective gave his prisoner a defiant look, which the latter returned with interest.

"Now, Jesse, there's one chance for you to escape the gallows."

"What is it?" asked Jesse.

"I'll do all I can for you, under one condition."

"Name it."

"Tell me where Colonel Lover's son is, whom you stole seven years ago."

"Will you let me go if I do?"

"I will."

"Then take these papers out of my pocket; they will tell you where to find him."

The detective was about to put his hand into Jesse's pocket in good faith, when the latter gave him a terrible blow, bringing his manacled hands with the greatest force down on his head, knocking him senseless.

Like a tiger at bay, he sprang at George Best, and also dealt him a furious blow on the right temple, knocking him senseless likewise.

"There, you infernal wretches!" exclaimed the enraged highwayman. "The man's not born who can get the better of Jesse James. Now to get these irons off."

Saying which, he took the key from the detective's pocket, placed it between his teeth, and, by a most dextrous movement made himself free.

Helping himself to the weapons and valuables of the fallen men, he was debating whether he should put a few bullets into their brains so as to be sure of their death, when he heard the tramp, tramp of many hoofs.

Rapidly mounting his horse, he turned to the direction whence came the sounds, and saw a posse of about twenty men but a hundred yards away.

"Molasses and mortar!" he ejaculated; "but they seem

to be making it hot for me to-day. I'll just let them pass, and pay a visit to the place where they came from."

Making a flank movement, he rode about thirty yards to the right of the road among some low bushes.

He sprang quickly from his mare, at the same time saying to her:

"Down, Bess, old girl, down, and keep as quiet as you can!"

The intelligent beast immediately obeyed the voice of its master by laying itself down on its side, and stretching itself out as if dead.

The posse halted when it came to where the two men lay.

"Who has done this?" asked the sheriff.

"Quick, some of you, see whether they are dead or alive!"

"They are alive."

In a few minutes the detective and Best returned to consciousness.

"How did you meet with this accident?" queried the sheriff.

"Jesse James, of course," the detective replied. "I never thought that devil would get the best of me so easily as he did."

As the detective related how he had captured and lost Jesse James, loud imprecations were heard on every side, which the concealed outlaw could plainly hear.

"Then he can't be far from here?" said the sheriff.

"No; I suppose he made tracks as he heard you coming. He can't be more than a few hundred yards ahead of us."

"Ahead, you say?"

"Yes, of course; that's the way he was going, and, should he have changed his mind, you would have seen him."

"Then, after him, lads! Don't let the brute escape us this time. Think of the reward, boys!"

"Yes, think of the reward, but remember me," mockingly exclaimed Jesse, as he watched the horsemen disappear in the distance. "Up, Bess! Now for a lark at the expense of those fools."

CHAPTER CXCV.

THE VERDELLA BANK ROBBERY.

Jesse then set out for Verdella, whence the posse had just come.

It was nearly one o'clock as he reached the small town, which contained one bank and several produce and liquor stores.

Jesse sprang from his horse in front of the bank, and walked in.

There were two customers, the cashier, and a young lad present; the rest had gone to lunch.

"Is the manager in?" quietly questioned Jesse of the cashier, who was busy counting greenbacks.

"Yes, sir; but he's too busy; what do you want?"

"I want to see him personally on most important business, and I have no time to wait."

The cashier gave Jesse a very suspicious look, but the frank, blue eyes of the outlaw seemed to be a good recommendation.

"Step this way, then," he said, showing Jesse into the manager's office, and then retiring.

"What can I do for you, sir?" asked Mr. Skelton, the manager, as he sat over some papers, which he seemed to be studying, while Jesse noticed that the door of the safe was open.

"You can and will do a great deal for me. In the first place, hold up your hands. I'm Jesse James."

The manager turned deadly pale as he heard the last words, and saw a revolver leveled at his head.

He threw up his hands at once.

"Now," said Jesse, it depends upon you whether you live or die. One false move, and I'll riddle you with bullets. How much money have you in that safe?"

"About twelve thousand dollars."

"Just the sum I want. Here, take that bag and put all the money you've got into it."

The frightened manager obeyed.

"Now, how much has the cashier got?"

"About four thousand dollars more."

"Call him in, but remember, one sign of treachery, and you are a dead man."

The manager was about to go to the door to call the cashier, when Jesse called out:

"Stop! Have you no other means of calling him? Tell the truth, or, by Heaven, it'll be the worse for you."

"Yes, I have. By touching this bell twice."

"Well, do so."

A moment later the cashier entered.

"Throw up your hands at once!"

The cashier did not immediately obey, but made a side spring to the door.

"Throw up your hands, or I'll fire, you cur!" exclaimed Jesse, angrily.

The cashier took in the situation at once.

He saw that his life was at stake, but he was a brave man.

He threw up his hands, however.

"How much money have you got?" asked Jesse.

"I refuse to tell you."

"What! Do you know who I am?"

"I presume you are one of the James boys."

"I am Jesse James, and, by heaven, if you don't do as I tell you, I'll blow your brains out."

"You may do what you like, but you cannot make me disloyal to the trust imposed in me."

"You are a brave man. I like your nerve. I shall not harm you, but you must submit to my tying you."

"Do what you like; I am at your mercy."

Jesse then made cashier and manager fast, took the bag of money, walked behind the counter, calmly emptied the drawers, while the clerk and boy looked wonderingly on.

Turning to the clerk, Jesse said:

"If you keep a still tongue in your head, I'll do you no harm; but, if you say a word, I'll kill you just the same as I have those other two."

The clerk and boy were too frightened to do or say anything.

Jesse obtained about four thousand dollars more, and then walked over to the liquor store in front of the bank.

"Pour me out a glass of whisky, your best, and give me a bottle, besides!" he exclaimed to the boniface behind the bar.

"Who are you, that you ask like that?" questioned the latter.

"Jesse James, and, for not being civil, hand me over those bills there, and that watch you've got, or I'll put daylight through you."

The man did as he was told.

Jesse thought there was no one present, but he had made a mistake.

There was a young man in the cellar, behind and underneath the bar.

As soon as he heard the outlaw declare himself, he hastened out through a back way and gave the alarm.

A dozen or more men were soon collected to capture or kill the daring highwayman.

In the meantime, the robbery of the bank had become known, and the people were incensed at being robbed in broad daylight.

Black Bess, the outlaw's famous mare, soon knew of the approach of strange horses and gave a peculiar whinny.

She acted so nervously that Jesse became alert at once.

As he rushed into the street, he saw a large body of horsemen hastening in his direction.

He recognized the danger, and, in a few bounds, had reached his mare.

The posse saw him, and commenced firing at him.

Their weapons were poor, and they themselves poor shots.

Jesse returned the fire, and one of his opponents fell at the first shot.

He emptied the contents of two revolvers at them, and then dashed away, without waiting to see what damage he had done.

Two had been killed and four wounded.

In a few minutes Jesse saw that he was being pursued on horseback by four men.

He hastened on to gain a forest, which he saw in front of him, hotly pursued by the others.

And they were gaining on him, for his mare was getting very tired, and she had not eaten anything for two days.

They were about three hundred yards behind him.

A bullet came whizzing past his head.

"Confound it!" he exclaimed, "they've got a good shot among them this time."

Again a bullet flew past him, almost touching his shoulder.

By this time he had reached a dense part of the forest.

Springing from Black Bess, he again told her to lie down, which she did.

He awaited the approach of the four.

Suddenly his revolver rang out three times, and he saw one rider fall.

What was his surprise to hear shots from the rear, and see two more riders fall, while the fourth galloped away.

With a wild coyote yell, a horseman made his appearance.

In a moment Jesse had recognized him.

It was Bob Younger.

CHAPTER CXCVI.

FOR A HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.

Jesse and Frank James, three Youngers, Bill Anderson, George Clayton, Abe Cunningham and Fletch Taylor are assembled in Jesse James' cave.

Jesse James, as captain, is the spokesman.

"Well, pards, Cole Younger has already told you why we're here to-night. Monday night, at twenty past eight, the No. 4 express will arrive at Carthage on its way from Kansas City. I have received information that there will be one hundred thousand dollars on board. Boys, that boodle must be ours. All our plans are prepared. Cole Younger and my brother leave here to-night, so as to come with the train, and see that all is right inside, while we do the outside. What say you, pards?"

"Hurrah for Jesse James!" cry out half-a-dozen voices.

"The express must be stopped at Jasper, where we will lie in wait. Bill Anderson and I will look out for the guards and detectives. Bob and John Younger will see to the engineer and fireman. Clayton and Cunningham will lie low, to prevent outside interference. The others will be prepared to assist me whenever they get a chance. Are you all agreed?"

"All agreed!" they respond.

"Well, now take a pull at the bottle all around, and then disband, to meet at Jasper at eight o'clock."

Shortly afterward all retired except the Youngers and James brothers.

"Bob," said Jesse, "I've had no time to thank you for your opportune arrival the other day. How did you come to be there just in the nick of time?"

"When you told us to scatter, I made tracks north, but found there were too many out for us, so I turned west again, and had been working through the woods when I heard shots. I soon saw you being chased, so I just put in my say, and dropped a few of the jays. Devilish glad I was to see you, too."

Four days later Express No. 4 left Kansas City.

There were, besides the ordinary officials, ten passengers on board.

Of these, six were railroad detectives.

Of the other four, two were bank officials, in charge of the load of dollars on board, which they were taking to a large syndicate firm that had been buying up thousands of acres in Western Missouri.

Of the other two, one appeared to be a Roman Catholic priest, and the other a rough old woman.

One of the detectives was Colonel Saunderson, the noted Union Pacific Railroad detective.

He had noticed the old woman, and seemed somewhat curious about her.

He sat down beside her, and began a conversation:

"Excuse me, madam, but do you belong anywhere about Carthage, the station where we stop?"

"Guess not, old 'un. My home's a few miles t'other side Carthage. Got a chew?"

"Certainly, madam; do you chew?"

"W'at d'ye take a pursin fur w'at can't chew in this part o' ther world?"

"No offense, madam; here you are."

The old woman helped herself liberally, and began chewing and expectorating in a manner that even astonished the experienced detective.

"I presume you are pretty well known about these parts."

"Know every durned stick, and every durned dog knows Mother Jones."

"Indeed, Mrs. Jones. Then you must have heard of the James brothers."

"Heerd o' 'em? D'ye think I'm deaf?"

Here the old woman raised her voice to a high pitch, and grew extremely excited.

"The durned curs and thievin' rascals has killed my on'y son; but wait, I'll get even wi' 'em."

"Then you have good reason to be bitter against them."

"Bitter, d'ye say, old 'un? I guess I'm durned bitter. If I hed my own way, I'd tie the hull gang ter a tree by ther hair o' ther heds, and slit ther throats wide open."

The old woman grew so ugly while speaking that the

detective shrank from her, horrified at such malignant ferocity in a woman.

She had convinced him of her intense hatred for the gang, however, and that seemed to be the principal thing she desired.

Her vindictive and loud speaking had attracted the attention of three other detectives, who finally approached her.

"Do you know anything about their whereabouts?" questioned the colonel further.

"Yes I do. They're hidin' up near Barton, an', if ten good men wanted ter cotch 'em, I'd make one ter show ther way."

"You don't mean to say you know where they actually are?"

"D'ye think I'm a liar? Didn't I jest tell yer I knew w'ere they was? Ef ye think yer know better'n me, w'at d'ye ask me fur?"

The detective tried to pacify the woman, but illy succeeded, for she grew very conservative, and drew into a corner, with a heavy frown on her sun-tanned face.

"Come, madam, excuse me if I appeared doubtful of your ability, but the news seemed too good to be true. If you will do what you have just stated, I'll soon get ten or twenty men, good and true, to follow you, and, besides, you will be enriched to the extent of many thousands of dollars."

"I don't want no money; I want revenge fur my boy w'at they murdered, an' I'll git it ef I has ter go myself."

"And I'll help you to get it, madam," said the colonel.

"Yer will, sure?"

"Yes, certainly I shall."

"Then shake."

They shook hands heartily.

"But w'ere ye goin' ter git ther men ter foller me?" she asked.

"Well, all these men present are bold detectives, only too anxious to meet the cowardly Jameses," he returned, pointing to the other detectives.

"Air them all fren's er yourn?"

"Of course they are."

"Then shake, boys; I'll lead you ter them."

They all shook hands with the eccentric old female.

"Now, boys, I wants yer ter pledge me that ye'll all stick ter me, and help me cotch them Jameses."

"Oh, we'll stick to you, old lady, all right."

In the meantime she had pulled a large leather-covered flask out of a bag she held.

"Ladies first, gents!" and she put it to her lips, and apparently took a good draught.

The detectives desired to keep her in good humor, so each of them took a good stiff drink.

The train was now nearing Jasper.

A few moments after the men had partaken of the liquid they were roiling on the floor in dreadful agony.

"Treachery, by Heaven!" exclaimed the other detectives, jumping up and reaching for their revolvers.

The priest had also sprung to his feet, and, with the rapidity of electricity, had fired two pistol-shots, bringing down two men.

The old woman also began firing away.

Shots were interchanged on both sides.

CHAPTER CXCIV.

THE HOLD-UP.

In less time than it takes to write it, these two, the priest and the woman, had overpowered the detectives.

The shots had attracted none of the guards; perhaps the noise of traveling had deadened the sounds of the firing.

"Cole, you're a dandy; you played your part well," exclaimed the one in priestly garb.

"Yes, Frank, we couldn't have done better."

And Frank James and Cole Younger at once set about firmly binding all the detectives.

Meanwhile the train had stopped.

A moment later Jesse James and Bill Anderson, revolvers in hands, entered the train, closely followed by several other outlaws.

The engineer and fireman had been held up.

"Hello, Jesse!" exclaimed Frank. "We've done up these curs."

"All right; follow me into the next car."

Four of them rushed into the other car, where the money lay.

There were six men here.

"Throw up your hands!" sang out Jesse.

For a reply the two bank officials blazed away at the leader.

One of the bullets missed Jesse and struck Anderson on the jaw, making a hole in his left cheek.

Bang! bang! rang out shot after shot.

The guards were plucky men, and kept up a steady fire, and a regular tornado of whizzing bullets ensued.

Frank James shot one of the guards through the head.

Jesse sent three bullets through another, but he still continued to fire.

It was a bitter fight.

The car lights were out, and the smoke so darkened the car that no one could see clearly.

Shots were fired at random on both sides.

Cole Younger brought down one of the bank officials.

Putting his head through the window, Jesse sang out:

"Bring a couple of lanterns here, some of you."

A moment later Cunningham came in with two lanterns.

One of the guards fired a shot at him as he entered the doorway, and he fell with a bullet in his right thigh.

Jesse took up the lights with a curse, and felt several bullets whistle around him.

By the aid of the lanterns the guards could be seen, and a volley was fired at them.

Two of them fell with a groan.

The last one threw up his hands.

But Bill Anderson was so infuriated at receiving his wound that he shot him down in cold blood.

Jesse then hastened to the safe.

There was no key.

"Quick, Cole and Frank, search them for the key," roared out Jesse.

No key was forthcoming that would fit the safe.

"Hang it!" yelled Jesse. "Where's the dynamite?"

"There you are, Jesse," replied one.

It did not take them long to blow open the safe.

A large cash box was inside, also locked.

With a few blows of an ax they opened it, and went almost crazy as their eyes fell on heaps of gold and greenbacks.

Jesse put them all into a sack.

"Look sharp, boys," said he, "there must be some more money about."

A search was made, and four thousand dollars more discovered.

While they were busy relieving the wounded of all their valuables, one of the outlaws who had been keeping watch outside rushed up, exclaiming:

"Quick, boys, git fer yer lives! Here's a hull posse down on us."

"Where?" asked Jesse.

"Just a few hundred yards away."

"How many?"

"About fifty, all on horseback."

Indeed, the tramp of many horses could be distinctly heard already.

"Get to your horses, all of you," called out Jesse.

In a few minutes they were all mounted, galloping quickly away, hotly pursued by the posse, which had noticed their retreat, and had begun firing.

With wild yells of defiance the outlaws returned the shots, though the night was too dark for them to take correct aim.

However, a volley fired by the posse did damage enough to kill a horse belonging to Frank James and lame one of Bob Younger's.

They mounted behind two other men, and sped on.

"We are too many," said Jesse, "to keep together, so

let us scatter. Meet me to-morrow night at the cave, where we will divide."

"All right, Jesse," they all replied, as they galloped away in various directions, the darkness aiding them in baffling their pursuers.

In vain did the posse continue their search after the bold train robbers throughout that night and the next day.

The James boys and their followers had made their names to ring out through the whole civilized world.

Never before had such a daring robbery taken place.

Never before had train robbers gained so much wealth by doing so little.

The James gang was enriched by more than one hundred thousand dollars in one hour.

CHAPTER CXCVIII.

THE MYSTERIOUS PEDDLER.

The news of the great train robbery had attracted widespread attention, and several posses and detectives were scouring the country in search of any members of the gang.

The majority of the latter had taken themselves into Mexico, there to spend their ill-gotten gains in all kinds of debauchery.

The Younger brothers were in the Cherokee country.

Frank James had gone to Frisco.

Jesse made up his mind to pay his mother's home a visit, with whom his wife also lived. Knowing that a large number of authorities were out after him, he found it necessary to assume a disguise, and a few days later he had arrived at the lonely farmhouse on the hill occupied by his mother.

They did not know him as he approached the house, and his tall, bony mother grasped a rifle suspiciously as she saw the supposed stranger ride boldly up to the house.

Jesse laughed, amused at his mother's caution.

"What, mother, do you not know me?" he merrily exclaimed.

A joyful exclamation burst from Mrs. Samuels' lips as she recognized the voice of her son, and they were soon locked in each other's arms.

Bad and unscrupulous as the James brothers were as outlaws, as sons they were tender and affectionate.

"Where is Polly, mother?"

"She jest went inter the barn, Jesse, my boy. She'll be here in a minit."

She had scarcely finished when his wife entered and flew to the arms of her robber-husband.

Indeed, when one saw the mutual love that existed in this family, nobody would believe that this was a den of

ruthless murderers and highwaymen, and that the occupants were ever on the watch against surprises by spies, posses, or detectives.

"How could you return here at this time, Jesse?" asked his wife.

"Why, Polly?"

"The whole country is thick with suspicious-looking men. Only yesterday three were here, and I am sure they were detectives."

"Why didn't you shoot them, then?"

"How could I, when they did nothing to us, and I had no proof as to my suspicions? There comes a stranger, just this very moment."

Sure enough, a strange-looking individual was approaching the house on an aged and weary-looking beast.

In front and behind him were parcels, which indicated that he was a peddler.

It was by no means uncommon to see solitary peddlers on horseback in those parts of the country, but the words of his wife had made Jesse suspicious.

He felt safe in his disguise, but he wanted no spies about.

As the peddler neared the door, Jesse met him.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" he asked, sternly, of the uncouth-looking, red-bearded stranger, who appeared frightened at the rough greeting he had received.

"Ach Gott, boss, I doesn't vant noddings much, but mine horse ish very veak, und mine insides ish very emdy, und I wants to know if you us somedings to eat vill give."

"Where do you come from last?"

"I am come dish morning de vay vrom Independence, und I haff sell noddings all de day."

"What have you got for sale?"

"Ach, I got all vat ish nice, vat ish goot. Sell every ding vot ish goot. Noddings vot ish bad. You buy?"

"Well, show us what you've got, Dutchy."

The peddler opened up his two boxes and displayed the usual show of trinkets and gaudery.

Jesse was evidently satisfied that he had to deal with a real German peddler, or he would never have told his mother to give him something to eat, and himself showed him where the horse could be fed also.

When the German entered he was received very suspiciously by Mrs. Samuels and Mrs. Jesse James, especially by the former, who seemed to see in every stranger a detective in pursuit of her sons.

Just as the stranger sat down a fine, intelligent lad of about fourteen burst into the room.

He was booted, spurred, and armed like an outlaw.

His manly face and finely-cut features would tell any

one at a glance that he could be no relation of the Jameses, and yet Mrs. Samuels called him son.

He recognized Jesse at once, but imbued by long training with caution, he saluted him as a stranger on noticing the peddler.

"Vell, my preddy poy, can I do noddings for you?" asked the latter. "I got some very fine dings for poyes so prave und handsome as you."

He herewith pulled out several penknives, daggers, pistols, and revolvers.

All present seemed pleased with the show.

"Anything you would like there, George?" asked Jesse of the lad.

"Yes, I wouldn't mind having one of those daggers, and a couple of revolvers."

"Well, why don't you help yourself?"

The boy didn't require a second hint.

Dexterously snatching two daggers and two revolvers out of the cases, he bounded out of the house with them.

The German's eyes filled with consternation and sorrow, while the others seemed to enjoy the theft as a huge joke.

"Mine Gott, mine Gott!" exclaimed the peddler, piteously, "I vas von proken-hearted Deutcher ven he no gomes mit mine valuables back. Ach Gott, mine Herr, call him back, call him back; he has me ruined."

"Oh, shut up, you blubbing old fool of a double Dutchman. Do you think we can afford to feed you and your horse for nothing? How much does it all come to?"

"Ach, mine Herr, dose dings vas very bretty, und very dear; dey cost me alone dirty dollar."

"Well, they'll be mighty dirty dollars you'll get from me for them."

"Ach Gott, you wouldn't rob von poor Sherman peddler? But der poy ish a goot poy, und I sells you vot he dakes for twenty-five dollars. Ish der poy your brudder?"

"What has that got to do with you, you old saurkraut chewer?"

"Ach, dot don't haff noddings mit me to do, but der poy vos so nice. He ish von prave boy; I likes dese prave poyes."

"Oh, get out of this," exclaimed Jesse, angrily, giving one of the showcases a kick.

As he did so, the case struck against the peddler's knees.

The concussion must have been severe, for the German fell back, and in doing so raised his arms to save himself from falling.

One of his hands, apparently accidentally, grasped the

false beard of Jesse and drew it completely from the outlaw's face.

With a loud curse the robber-chief sprang at the throat of the stumbling peddler, but the latter adroitly avoided him.

Looking at Jesse, he exclaimed:

"Vat, Jesse James! My Gott!"

"How do you know me? Speak, or I'll blow your brains out!" cried Jesse, drawing his revolver.

"Don't shoot, don't shoot, Mister Jesse. I am von friend; don't shoot; wait von minute."

"What do you mean?"

"Here, I haff von ledder from your brudder Frank. He giff me him before he leaf Indebendence for San Fransisgo."

"Well, give it quick."

"All right, Mister Jesse. Ven I knowed pefore dat you Jesse James, de great, prave captain was, I giff you much sooner."

Jesse snatched the letter, tore it open, and read it quickly.

CHAPTER CXCIX.

FRANK'S LETTER.

This is what it said:

DEAR JESSE:—The bearer, Jacob Wurst, may be trusted. I made his acquaintance three years ago, when he did me a great service. He used to supply Quantrell with stores before the Northerners destroyed his property and brought him to what he is. He has a thorough hatred of them, and as he made a fortune through Quantrell, you may be sure he would only be too glad to be of service to you and me.

He brought me news that he knows three detectives in disguise were dispatched to watch the farm. So, look out. I told him to be very careful if he saw any strangers about. He knows you by sight, as he has seen you several times.

Leave to-night for Frisco. With love to all,

FRANK.

The writing seemed unmistakably Frank's, and the letter explained to Jesse the conduct of the peddler.

"Shake, old Dutchy, and excuse me for my roughness."

Jesse showed the letter to his mother and his wife.

Then going to the door he gave a shrill whistle.

A few minutes later the young lad, George, made his appearance.

"Where are those things you took from Dutchy, George?"

"Here, Jesse."

"Hand them back to him."

The boy obeyed.

"Now Saurkraut, name your own price."

"For you, Mister Jesse, only twenty-five dollar."

"No, you said thirty at first. Here they are."

"Now, George, take those things!"

The boy was overjoyed to receive them back.

The peddler added a highly-ornamented jackknife.

Later on the peddler was seen wandering about aimlessly around the farm until he met George.

During the time that he was conversing with the boy Mrs. Samuels approached without being noticed by either.

It seemed to her very suspicious that this peddler should be questioning the boy so much, and she determined to find out more about him.

As he was about to proceed on his journey, his mother begged Jesse to keep him over night, which he did.

When they were about to retire for the night Jesse asked his mother to brew them a punch.

It was brought a little later.

Mrs. Samuels very dexterously slipped a small powder into the glass of the peddler without being seen.

He soon grew weary, and his brain heavy, and he then knew that he had been drugged.

In vain he thought of some plan to save himself.

His thoughts were too powerless to carry out any plan to defeat the effects of the powerful soporific. Wildly and valiantly he struggled against the overwhelming influence of the drug.

He saw that he was being narrowly watched by Mrs. Samuels.

However, this did not prevent him from secreting several important documents about his person.

Soon after that he grew dizzy and remembered no more, going off while sitting at the table supping his whisky.

"Hello!" cried Jesse, "what the deuce is the matter with him? He looks as if he had been drugged! Did any of you dose him?"

"Yes, Jesse, I did," replied his mother.

"What did you do that for?"

"Because I saw him speaking too much with George, and heard him askin' too many questions about matters which he seemed to know too much of already."

"What! is that true?"

"Certainly it is. Just wait till the drug takes proper effect, and then we'll search him, for I'm not satisfied. I believe he is a detective."

"If he is, he dies! I want no false spies about here, whether they're after me or the youngster."

With that he stepped over to where the peddler lay sleeping and began a thorough search of his pockets.

He found nothing, however, that would show that the man was other than what he represented himself to be.

Mrs. Samuels also helped in the search.

Her sharp eyes noticed a piece of wire at the back of the neck, and she at once divined the truth."

"Ah, I thought so," she exclaimed.

"What is it?" asked Jesse.

"See here!" and she pulled off a wig and beard from the peddler's head and face.

"Jim Dalton!" fairly shrieked the outlaw, as he recognized the countenance of the famous detective.

"He shall die!"

"No, wait, Jesse, until he recovers from the effects of the drug, and then you can question him first and shoot him afterward. We'll tie him so fast that it will be utterly impossible for him to escape."

Jesse was wild with rage at being duped so easily, and his swearing and cursing were horrible.

He, however, followed his mother's advice, and made the detective fast and then retired.

No sooner had he gone to bed than an old negro woman, who had been watching the whole scene, and was employed about the place, entered, released the detective, and gave him a dose which acted like magic, for in a few minutes he was himself again.

"Hush, Mr. Dayton. I've saved yer; gwine away at once, massa, or dey kill yer 'morrow mornin'. Yer once sabed my chile, I now sabed you; gwine 'way, quick!"

Dayton did as he was bid, and soon disappeared in the darkness, for he knew, as he had been recognized, it would be death to remain.

Before going, he questioned the old woman about the boy, but she could give him no information on that point.

"Well, I'll have to find that boy under some other disguise. I believe George is the colonel's son, right enough. Get him I shall and must. Look to yourself, Jesse James. Jim Dalton always wins in the long run!"

CHAPTER CC.

JESSE JAMES CORNERED.

"What a chance to catch Jesse James, now!" said Detective Jim Dayton to himself, as he wandered along in the darkness.

"By George! That was a narrow escape, Jim.

"I thought that letter which I forged would enable me to gain Jesse's confidence, and thereby obtain some information of the boy.

"How I wish I could meet some one now, say a couple of detectives—how easily we could catch Jesse.

"I've half a mind to go back and try myself.

"But no, it would be useless.

"Those women are as bad as he is, and just as ferocious."

Dayton had been working his way over the hill toward

Kearney, minus his horse, for he knew not where Jesse had put him, nor whether any other members of the gang were about the farm.

The night was dark and gloomy, and not a light in sight.

He had just reached the edge of a small clump of trees when he suddenly felt a sack thrown over his head, and he was heavily brought to the earth.

A moment later he felt the well-known snap of the handcuffs around his wrists.

He was a prisoner.

"We've bagged one of them," said a voice.

Dayton tried to speak, but the sack prevented him.

By the voices he opined that he was in the power of three men.

Whether they were highwaymen or detectives who had captured him in mistake he was as yet unable to discover.

Evidently, they were determined to take no chances with him, for they secured his feet as well as his hands.

Then they removed the sack from the head of the half-smothered Dayton.

As soon as his dazzled eyes permitted, he saw with a feeling of relief that he was in the hands of three detectives.

"Well, if you are not a set of fools, I don't know who is," he laughingly remarked. "Take off these irons, Boynton; don't you know me? Why, man, I'm Jim Dayton."

"So it is. Jumping Joseph! I thought we had one of the Jameses. Release him, boys, it's Jim Dayton, the cleverest detective, South or West."

When he was again free Jim told them of his plan to capture Jesse James, and asked them if they were willing to assist him.

"You bet!" was the characteristic reply.

"Well, then, let us turn back at once," said Jim. "As I know the run of the place better than you do, I'll take the lead. Look to your shooters and sneak after me like a snake after a frog."

"All right, Dayton, go ahead, we'll follow."

Not even the bark of a dog nor the croak of a neighboring frog disturbed the gloom of the opaque and silent night as these four men softly neared the house with revolvers ready for immediate action.

Dayton tried the door through which he had taken his exit, but found it locked.

The windows were also fastened from the inside.

"What shall we do now?" he asked.

"We'll have to burst in the door somehow," replied Boynton.

"I think we had better lie in wait till the morning, and when Jesse comes out some of us can cover him while

the others put the bracelets around his wrists," remarked Fitzgerald, the elder of the three new arrivals.

"Yes, I favor that plan, too," said Cawley, the third detective.

"Throw up your hands, you sneaking curs!" rang out in stentorian tones from several places at once.

The four detectives were so startled that for the moment they lost their wits.

"Throw up your hands at once, or every one of you dies!" a rough voice again sang out.

Dayton was the first to gain his presence of mind.

"Don't give in, boys; sell your lives as dearly as you can, for it means death by torture to be caught now."

"Right you are, Dayton," they responded, "it's fight or die."

They blazed away in the direction whence the voices had come, while they themselves fell on the earth for shelter.

A perfect shower of bullets answered their opening fire.

In a moment a light was made in the farmhouse, the door was opened, and Jesse James made his appearance completely in armor, even to the paint-pot helmet on his head.

The detectives fired several shots at him at once and were astounded to see him walk calmly into the house again, and a moment later appear with a large lantern.

"Look out, Jesse!" called a voice to him, "there's a crowd of detectives about the house."

"How many of the boys with you, Cummings?" coolly questioned Jesse.

"About a dozen, and——"

Before the man could finish a bullet from Dayton's revolver had struck him in the neck, and he fell, seriously, though not mortally, wounded.

He was Jim Cummings, Jesse James' noted lieutenant. Over a dozen shots replied to Dayton's, and Fitzgerald fell with a bullet through his brain.

Forward came Jesse, while the three detectives kept up an incessant but harmless shower of bullets upon him.

"Boys, get out of this any way you can," whispered Dayton to his brother detectives.

They made a rush for some trees that were near at hand.

In doing so the glare of Jesse's lantern revealed the fugitives and a volley followed them.

Boynton was struck by three bullets and fell dead without a word.

Dayton had now divined that Jesse was clad in his curious armor.

He fired low for Jesse's legs, and had the satisfaction of hearing a wild yell from the outlaw, for he had been struck in the calf of the left leg. This did not deter him,

however, from following the fleeing detectives and firing after them as he went.

A bullet grazed Dayton's face, and a second tore part of the flesh from his shoulder.

Another volley came from the outlaws, and Cawley fell, shot in the groin.

"Heavens! I'm done for!" he exclaimed. "Run, Dayton, run, and give my love to my wife. Good-by. Give my——"

Here he became unconscious.

Dayton ceased firing and managed to get away into the bush.

He felt himself growing weak.

He climbed a nearby tree and secured himself to two branches.

Not a moment too soon, for Jesse and four others soon passed by in hot pursuit of him.

"How many have we killed?" he heard Jesse ask.

"Three."

"Is Dayton among them?"

"No."

"Then we must get him! A thousand dollars to the man who brings him to me, dead or alive!"

CHAPTER CCI.

FOILED AGAIN.

Dayton descended the tree and made all possible haste toward Kearney, which he reached the next day in safety.

Jesse and his followers hunted for him for a couple of hours longer and then gave up the search.

Jesse was in a terrible rage.

"Woe betide the detective that crosses my path again. Not a minute's grace will he get. I'll shoot every one of them down like wild wolves on first sight. What has become of Jim Cummings?"

They sought about until they found him unconscious, weltering in his blood.

He was taken inside the farmhouse and cared for by Mrs. Samuels.

She possessed considerable experience and skill in the treating of the wounded, and in a few days Cummings recovered.

"How did you fellows happen to be here to-night?" questioned Jesse, when they were seated drinking a bottle of whisky.

"It happened that we found ourselves at Craig's, near Kearney, day 'fore yesterday, an' Jim Cummings recognized a couple o' detectives.

"He set us on ter watch 'em an' we trailed 'em in this direction.

"Jim followed us up.

"We lost sight o' ther detectives in ther dark, and Jim told us ter make fur ther farm, which we did, w'en we found 'em trying ter git in."

"Yes; but I'd like to know how that sneaking devil, Dayton, got loose," said Jesse.

"There's been foul play somewhere, and woe to them that helped him when I find them out.

"We mustn't stop here any longer. That Dayton'll have the whole country after us in very short order."

"Yer bet we will git away from here as quick as we ken. We're bound fur ther Indian Territory at onct. But whar air you agoin', Jesse?"

"I don't know yet. Heard anything from Jasper?"

"Yes, they're jest fire-hot mad, every man, woman, and child o' 'em."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Jesse, "no wonder; don't blame 'em a bit. Think I'll pay 'em a visit soon."

"W'at? Yer ain't mad enough ter do that, Jesse, sure? Yer'll be surrounded by hundreds at once, an' no marcy given yer, I tell yer."

"Don't care; I'm goin' to Jasper."

"Then we'll go along wi' yer."

"No, you won't; too many cooks spoil the broth.

"I'm going in disguise, and am far safer alone.

"You go your way, and I'll go mine.

"When I have anything more for you to do, I'll let you all know."

"All right, Jesse. Good-by, old man, an' take good care o' yerself."

When they had parted, Jesse mounted his Black Bess and started for Jasper, disguised as a Mexican cowboy.

He had proceeded about six miles when he noticed four riders, armed to the teeth, approaching him.

As they neared, Jesse recognized in them a sheriff and his assistants from Liberty.

"After me, you curs, are you?" remarked Jesse, to himself. "Well, I bet I'll give you your trouble's worth."

"Wall, stranger, whar yer bound fur?" asked the sheriff of Jesse, as he rode up.

"Any whar out o' this thievin' hole," responded the outlaw, assuming the ordinary cowboy dialect.

"This place o' your'n seems ter be piled up wi' durned robbers and thievin' murderers."

"How so, stranger?"

"How so? Why, a couple miles back a big, red-bearded fellow, a-callin' hisself Jesse James, took my watch, chain, and greenbacks—gosh durn him!"

"What? Jesse James, did yer say, stranger?"

"Wall, I did; the sneak's robbed me o' my last cent, an' I got ter reach Jasper wi'out a dollar."

"Goin' ter Jasper, air ye?"

"Guess so."

"Wall, hyar's a couple o' dollars fur yer news, stranger. Whar did yer say yer met Jesse James?"

"This side o' Kearney, boss, and thank yer fur yer kindness," said Jesse, as he took the two dollars extended to him.

He noticed that the sheriff had a couple of hundred dollars left.

"Got any more dollars to spare, boss?" asked Jesse, in a most impudent manner.

The sheriff could scarcely believe his own ears.

He was dumfounded.

"Confound your impudence," he exclaimed, angrily. "Give me back those two dollars fur yer cheek."

"No, I won't!" yelled Jesse.

"Hand over the rest you've got, Sheriff Courtney, from Liberty, or I'll send you and the rest to death in a minute!" thundered Jesse, as he leveled with the quickness of lightning two revolvers at the four.

"Shell out, quick; I'm Jesse James."

The sheriff was nonplused by this sudden turn of affairs.

"Throw down your pistols, every one of you, or I'll put a bullet through your dirty bodies. Look sharp!"

The outwitted four could do nothing but obey.

In a moment they had thrown away their weapons.

"Now, sheriff, hand me over those other dollars you've got in your pocket!"

As there seemed nothing else to do, the discomfited sheriff obeyed.

"Now get off your horses at once, you curs," and Jesse made them do it at the point of his revolvers.

"Fasten those horses together."

They did so.

"Give them here!"

The sheriff led the four horses to Jesse, who took them by the bridles and galloped away with them, leaving the four men cursing their hard luck at being caught in such a trap.

When Jesse had gone a few miles further, he let the horses go whither they wished, and continued his journey toward Jasper, where he arrived three days later without further adventure.

CHAPTER CCII.

THE TRIP TO COLUMBIA.

About three months elapsed after the closing of the last chapter before Jesse returned to his old home in Missouri.

In the meantime Jesse had been in various parts of Texas, California and Mexico.

None knew better than he of the strategic importance and advantage to be gained by rapid movements.

In a few days after his return he was joined by his brother, Frank, the Younger brothers, and Jim Cummings.

They had all had a gay time of it in different parts of the States, and were now ready for further adventures.

"Well, what are we to do next, Jesse?" asked Cole Younger.

"I've bin thinkin' over the matter for some time, and have come to the conclusion to pay a visit to some small town in Kentucky. It's a long while since we have had any sport there."

"Or anywhere else, for that matter," said Frank James.

"Just propose something, Jesse, and we'll follow you, even if it's to rob the Treasury in New York," remarked John Younger.

"Well, pals, we've got a good many friends in Adair County, and Columbia's a pleasant little town in it where the district court meets this week. This being the case, the Columbia Bank ought to be pretty well filled, and I think we ought to have some of its cash. What do you say, boys?"

All agreed, and two days later, while the judge was addressing the jury, six horsemen dashed into the quiet little town.

They came galloping wildly down the streets, firing their revolvers, shouting and swearing.

The inhabitants rushed into houses for protection.

The excitement was beyond belief.

It was just between two and three o'clock as the James gang entered the place.

The cashier of the Deposit Bank of Columbia and a citizen were quietly gossiping in the former's office, when they heard the terrible noise.

Before they could ascertain what had occurred, three men burst in on them, holding cocked revolvers in their hands.

The three were Jesse and Frank James and Cole Younger.

John and James Younger stood guard in the street in front of the bank.

"Hand me over the keys of your safe!" cried Frank, presenting his revolver at the head of the cashier.

The cashier hesitated.

"Give up the keys at once, do you hear?" shouted Frank again, as he pressed the barrel of his pistol against the temple of the cashier.

"I shall not," replied the latter.

"You will, I tell you. Look sharp! I've got no time to waste. If you don't open the safe this very moment

"I'll blow your brains out. Are you going to open it or not?"

"No. I sooner——"

Bang! went Frank's revolver, and the brave cashier fell with a bullet through his brain.

"Heavens! Frank, why did you kill the poor wretch?" asked Cole Younger, indignantly.

"Shut up! I'll teach him to hesitate when I tell him to do anything."

While the above tragedy was being carried out, Jesse had confronted the citizen and recognized in him an old enemy, an ex-Federal officer.

"Ah! I know you, for a measly Yankee," he exclaimed, leveling his pistol at the defenseless man and firing.

The latter struck up the weapon and leaped out of the door unhurt, although Jesse sent several shots after him.

Cole Younger kept guard over the other men attached to the bank, while Jesse and Frank placed all the money they could find in a sack they carried with them.

The safe they could not open, for the combination was known only to the dead cashier and the president, who was out of town.

When they had gathered up all they could see they mounted their horses and dashed away with a whoop.

On their ride out of the town they kept up an incessant shower of bullets, at the same time swearing to shoot every soul in Columbia, if anybody dared to follow them.

The authorities were so bewildered by the rapidity and horror of the scene that they failed to take prompt action.

When it was too late a posse was organized, which followed the outlaws as far as Fentress County, Tennessee, where all trace of them was lost in those mountainous regions.

CHAPTER CCIII.

JESSE OUTWITS THE LEONITE POSSE.

A week later the gang was in Leon, Decatur County, Iowa.

Leon is a busy little place, with a good deal of capital to push it ahead.

Strangers come and go there every day, so when half a dozen horsemen entered quietly and dismounted in front of the bank no one took particular notice of them.

They were seen to be wrangling about the sale and purchase of some horses.

At last they seemed to have come to terms, for one of them, Jesse, stepped up to several citizens with:

"Can you change a twenty-dollar bill, please?"

"No, but they'll do it for you at the bank across the street," replied one.

Jesse, Cole Younger and Jim Cummings went into the bank.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" asked the cashier.

"Can you change this bill for me?" and Jesse placed the twenty-dollar greenback on the counter.

"Yes, certainly," and he stepped aside to get the change; when next he turned, Jesse held a cocked revolver in his face.

"Utter a word, Mr. Cashier, and I'll send your soul to blazes."

The man remained silent.

Cole and Frank busied themselves in putting all the money they could find into a bag.

The safe was open, and all its contents, of course, removed.

The proceeds of the robbery amounted to seventeen thousand dollars. The citizens soon became aware of what was taking place, and began to collect in large numbers and arm themselves for an attack on the daring outlaws.

John Younger, who was standing guard outside, rushed into the bank, exclaiming:

"Hurry up, boys; there's about two hundred armed men coming this way."

With a threat that he would shoot every man in the bank if they moved an inch, Jesse told the others to mount and clear out.

Revolvers in hand, they were soon on their horses.

"Come on, if you dare!" shouted Jesse, as he fired several shots at the approaching citizens, who discharged a volley at the fast-fleeing outlaws.

The latter were pursued for several days, but, as usual, escaped.

This robbery had taken place without the loss of a drop of blood.

The people were, however, terribly incensed, and large bodies of men scoured the country in search of the robbers.

The latter were not far away, however, but they managed to elude their followers by disguising themselves as farm hands.

Two days later Jesse was riding slowly along a road disguised as a granger, when he saw a posse in pursuit of himself.

Feeling sure that they had not seen him, he coolly turned his horse round and went to meet them.

"Hello, stranger! Where d'ye hail from?" asked the sheriff.

"I've jest come from Allendale. Some infernal son of a gun has stolen my hosses, and I wants ter cotch him. Ef I does, I'll give him a dose with these yere pills," touching his revolvers.

"Did you see anybody ahead of you?" queried the sheriff.

"Yas, I did, boss. I saw four as ugly lookin' hoss-thieves as ever I seed since I war born. Tarnation take the hoss-thieves, I c'd shoot every durned one o' 'em, so I could."

"Yes, there are plenty of robbers about nowadays. How far, did you say, were they ahead?"

"'Bout ten miles or so. It's more'n an hour since I seed 'em, an' they wus ridin' pretty sharp like, and my hoss is done up."

"What were they like?"

Jesse gave him a complete description of himself, Frank, Cole Younger and Jim Cummings, as they looked when they robbed the bank.

The sheriff consulted with his assistants.

"It's the exact description," said one.

"Shall we follow?" asked another.

"I'd like to," remarked a third, "but those fellows are very desperate and dangerous."

"You better believe they are," said one.

"What's ther matter, strangers?" asked Jesse.

"What are you givin' us? Do you mean to say you don't know what's the matter?"

"On my honor, I don't, boss; how ken I know w'en I jest come this yere way?"

"Have you not heard that the Leon Bank has been robbed of every cent?"

"You don't say so!"

"Yes, in broad daylight, an' those men you met are the thieves, and there's a big reward ofered for them."

"Wall, it's time fer me ter shift. Wot's ther country comin' ter? Pears like honest men kain't git 'long much longer, no how," grumbled Jesse.

"Will you make one to go along with us, stranger? We'll soon have more help."

"I'd like ter, but the durned hoss-thieves hev made this yere hoss lame, an' I kain't git 'long very fast. Howsomever, I'll go wi' yer as fur as I ken an' ef I comes 'cross these tarnation robbers I'll do my share o' the shootin', you bet yer boots!"

"Thanks, stranger, and if we catch the robbers you'll get your share."

Jesse turned round and rode on with them.

When Jesse had proceeded several miles in their company, he excused himself from going any further on account of the continued lameness of his horse.

When they were out of sight, Jesse dismounted.

"We've fooled those fellows, all right, Bess," and he herewith pulled out a penknife and removed a pebble from the off-hind hoof of his mare, which he had placed

between the shoe and the hoof when he saw the posse approaching.

He jumped on her back again, removed his disguise, and hastened across the country to intercept the posse.

Twenty minutes afterward he had obtained a lead of them without being noticed.

He hid himself in some bushes alongside of the road.

When they were opposite, Jesse dashed out suddenly and held two revolvers at them.

"Throw up your hands!" he thundered.

The men were so surprised by this unexpected onslaught that they threw up their hands at once, with the exception of the sheriff, who was brave enough to reach for his pistol.

Before he could bring it into play Jesse's revolver had bored a bullet through his heart, and he fell dead at the feet of his horrified comrades, while his horse bolted, panic-stricken, away.

"Move a hand, any of you, and you'll follow your leader."

The men were thoroughly cowed.

"Have any of you got handcuffs with you?" asked Jesse.

"Yes, we all have."

"Well, throw your shooters away first, and then hand me your handcuffs. If you monkey with me, I'll send you all to blazes, as sure as my name is Jesse James.

How the name acted.

They had all become chicken-hearted before, but now they were thoroughly demoralized.

They threw their revolvers away.

"Get off your horses."

When they had obeyed, Jesse laughed and sneered.

He was disgusted at their cowardice.

"Let one man step up to me at a time, and hand me his handcuffs."

When this had been done Jesse dismounted and handcuffed them all in a chain.

He then robbed them of all their possessions, and sent their horses galloping all over the country.

"Good-by, boys. Tell them when you get back to Leon that Jesse James robbed their bank and placed you where you are. Tell them, too, that if they send any more such posses after me or my men, that they had better provide them with petticoats and nursing bottles."

The poor manacled wretches could do nothing but return whispered curses for the outlaw's ironical words.

Jesse left them muttering, and galloped away highly amused.

He was bound for the cave of his gang.

CHAPTER CCIV.

THE WOODFORD RAID.

Jesse remained at the cave for four days alone, when Frank and Coleman Younger put in an appearance.

They related their adventures since they had parted.

They had all suffered a good deal in the meantime, especially Frank, who had received a shot-wound in the arm in an encounter with a posse.

Cole informed the brothers of the only piece of interesting news.

"I've got something to tell you, boys, besides my personal exploits," he remarked.

"Let us hear it," said Jesse.

"My brother Jim was surrounded by a posse, wounded, captured, and lodged in jail."

"**NO?** Where?" both asked.

"At present he is locked up in Woodford, but they intend taking him to Liberty to-morrow."

"That won't happen, Cole, if I can help it," exclaimed Jesse.

"So say I, too," said Frank.

"Thanks. I knew you would help me."

"Of course we shall. Have we not taken a solemn oath to assist one another in all dangers and difficulties?" asked Jesse.

"Have you made up your mind yet about the best plan by which to liberate him, Cole?" asked Frank.

"Yes. I have."

"Tell it."

"I propose that we three ride to Woodford to-night, disguised as cowboys.

"When we arrive there we must pretend to be drunk.

"After a while we shall begin arguing on some subject or another until we fight and create a disturbance, when, of course, we shall be arrested.

"They have only one small prison there, and once inside, it will not be difficult for us to get Jim out again."

"Not a bad plan at all, Cole," remarked Jesse.

"Yes, I think it will work. But we must use certain precautions."

"Name them."

"Let each of us take an old rusty pistol in one of his pockets, which the police will of course take from us, but take care to have a good Smith and Wesson concealed carefully about his person where it will not easily be discovered, a file, and a bottle of aquafortis."

"Oh, you can leave that part of the performance unsaid; we know all about that, Cole," said Jesse, cheerily.

"I'm aware of that, but it is better to refresh one's mind now and again on such weighty matters."

"Right you be, Cole; but when do we start?"

"At once, if you like."

"Let us get away then."

An hour later saw them on their way to Woodford.

In three hours they had reached it.

Cole's plan was carried out to the letter.

They behaved so noisily that they were soon inside the prison walls.

Here they found four armed guards keeping watch over Jim Younger.

There were only two pens, formed of iron bars about half an inch thick and two inches apart.

In one of them was Jim.

The other three outlaws were placed in the other pen.

They played the part of drunken men to perfection.

They abused their keepers in strong language, or sang songs in a loud, rollicking voice.

No one appeared to take any further notice of them, and left them to enjoy themselves as best they could.

Cole and Frank sang a duet, while Jesse used file and aquafortis.

The singing was continued for several hours, when Jesse had made an opening large enough for them to get through.

They now took a look at the guards, and discovered, to their joy, that two of them had fallen asleep.

Apparently, they had arranged some plan for two to sleep while the other two kept watch.

Just as the three outlaws were about to leave their pen the two sleeping guards were awakened by their comrades.

These in turn were soon asleep, as the sonorous snoring of the twain quite obviously proved.

"Now is the time," whispered Jesse.

Silently, softly, they crept up behind the all-unsuspecting guards.

A blow from the butts of Jesse's and Cole's revolvers laid them senseless on the floor.

Before the two sleepers could awaken, they were bound and gagged.

"Are you there, Jim?" asked Cole.

"Yes; is that you, Cole?"

"Hush; we'll soon have you free. Are you able to walk?"

"Oh, yes. I wasn't much hurt. Any of the others with you?"

"Yes; Frank and Jesse."

"Then we're all right?" he exclaimed, carelessly.

"Keep quiet until we're out of this hole, Jim."

It did not take them long to have him out.

For further security they bound the two other men, who were recovering consciousness.

They appropriated the guards' weapons, and made for the door, the lock of which they soon wrenched off.

Once more they were in the free atmosphere.

Not a soul was in sight to molest or hinder them.

"That was pretty easily done, Jesse," remarked Cole.

"Yes, but we are not out of the place yet; and before we go I have a little scheme to put through."

"What is it?" asked all.

"There don't seem to be anybody about, and I can read a sign up there which suggests a little boodle," and Jesse pointed to a stone house, in the front of which burned a lamp, revealing the words:

"WOODFORD SAVINGS BANK."

The others laughed heartily, for they well understood that Jesse intended making a night raid on it.

This was a more troublesome undertaking than it would be in the daytime.

But these reckless men gloried in the danger of such an exploit.

"Bully for you, Jesse," said Frank.

"What a face those people will make in the morning, when they find their guards bound, their prison empty, and their bank robbed," remarked Cole.

"But the thing is, how are we to get in?"

"You and I'll attend to that part of the business, Cole," answered Jesse.

"Frank and Jim will stand guard outside.

"But we must get our horses first, and one, too, for Jim, if possible."

"Let us get to the hotel stable. We can easily get in."

They made their way to the stable, the door of which was simply bolted on the outside.

As they entered they saw a man asleep on some bags of chaff.

In a few moments he was bound and gagged.

There were five horses in the stable, including their own.

"Take your pick of those two, Jim," said Jesse, and Jim, of course, chose the better one.

They rebolted the stable door and led their horses quickly to the front of the bank.

"You'd better mount, Jim, in case we should be surprised, for you would take some time to get up," warned Jesse.

Jim did so, and held the other horses, while Frank remained on foot with a revolver in each hand.

Jesse and Cole made an inspection of the building to find the simplest means of forcing an entrance.

They found that the back door was the easiest to force.

Cole had noticed an ax and a crowbar in the stable, and had brought them along with him, and very useful they proved.

Working as quietly as they could, they soon effected an entrance, but not without disturbing some occupant, for a voice was heard exclaiming:

"Who's there? Answer at once, or I fire!"

The two robbers remained silent for some time.

They heard somebody moving toward the door.

"Who's there? For the last time, I ask; answer or I fire!"

"Fire away, and be hanged to you!"

"Throw up your hands at once, you cur, or I'll make short work of you, as sure as I'm Jesse James!"

"For Heaven's sake, don't shoot me. I've got a large family to keep; have mercy upon me," whined the poor fellow.

Jesse struck a light and saw an old white-haired man on his knees.

As he saw the two robbers he trembled in every limb, and dropped the old-fashioned double-barreled revolver.

His hands were joined and raised on high in a most supplicating manner.

"For the love of Heaven, spare a poor old father!" he cried.

"That's all right, old man," said Jesse, highly amused.

"Get up. We won't hurt you as long as you behave yourself."

The old man began to pour out his thanks, when Jesse stopped him.

"We've got no time to talk. Have you got the keys to the safe?"

"No, no, sir; I have not."

"You lie, you have. Show them here, or I'll blow your head off."

"I swear to you I haven't."

"Who has them, then?"

"The cashier."

"Where does he live?"

"In Henly street."

"Well, can we get into the bank? If we can't get in within two minutes I'll blow your brains out!"

This was the kind of talk to have an effect.

The old fellow showed how the two robbers could get into the bank itself.

Here they soon forced open all the drawers, and were rewarded with a find of six thousand dollars odd.

The money was placed in a sack.

Just as they were about to go out, Frank rushed in.

"Quick, Jesse and Cole, here is a big crowd coming!"

"How could that happen? Who told on us?" asked Cole.

As they looked around it was soon evident to them who had aroused the inhabitants.

The old humbug, whom they had considered harmless, and forgotten, was not to be seen.

He must have sneaked away on the first occasion and awakened the populace.

They rushed outside and saw about fifty half-dressed men hastening toward the bank.

The posse saw the robbers coming out, and fired a volley at them.

The bullets flew around the outlaws without doing any damage.

The latter sprang to their horses.
 "Come on, you curs, if you dare!" yelled Jesse, and the outlaws emptied their revolvers at the half-clad inhabitants.

The latter returned the fire with a fierce fusillade. This time the bullets had effect.

Frank received a slight flesh wound in the right arm, and Jesse's horse one in a leg, making him useless for further riding.

"Curse the beggars!" yelled Jesse.
 "Get behind me, Jesse," said Frank.

Jesse removed the sack containing the spoils of the bank, and got up behind his brother.

The four outlaws reloaded their revolvers, and sent a volley into the midst of the crowd, which had by this time approached to within about sixty yards.

Some of the bullets must have taken effect, for the robbers could hear several groans.

They then put spurs to their horses and galloped away. The crowd hastened after them, firing as they came.

"Fire away and be hanged!" called out Jesse.

The outlaws hurried toward their cave in the forest, but, seeing that they were being followed by a posse, they were obliged to separate and double on their pursuers so as to baffle them.

In this they succeeded.

The next afternoon they all arrived at the cave, where a fair division of the Woodford Bank robbery spoils took place.

CHAPTER CCV.

JESSE HOLDS UP THE GOVERNOR.

Six weeks elapsed after the closing of the preceding chapter and some of the James gang were thirsting for more excitement.

"What's the next place, Jesse?" asked Cole.

"We'll have to be very careful," Jesse replied.

"Allan Pinkerton has sent down over a dozen of his best men, so I heard, and they are searching all over the country for us."

"Well, that hadn't ought to prevent us goin' to some place where we've never been before, and where, of course, they'd never think of our comin'," Frank James remarked.

"There's heaps of places in Missouri that would never think of receivin' a raid from any of us."

"Let's take such a place, Jesse."

"You're right, Frank, but which place do you think the best?"

"What about that durned French place, St. Genevieve? It's a quiet little town and most o' the inhabitants are foreigners."

"Bully for you, Frank; just the very place!" cried Jesse.

"Then let's mount and away," exclaimed Cole. "I'm just dying for a little sport of some kind."

Two days afterward the cashier of the St. Genevieve Savings Association walked to the bank in the company of a son of General Rozier.

As he entered the bank Mr. Harris, the cashier, noticed two men gazing at the building.

He walked behind the counter to go on with his duties.

Suddenly one of the two strangers walked in and up to him with a revolver in his hand.

"Throw up your hands!" cried the stranger, who was no other than Jesse James.

"We have to come to offer you our assistance in opening the bank this morning," the latter ironically remarked.

"So look sharp about it, and open your safe, Mr. Cashier, unless you want to take lunch with the devil.

"Be quick; we've got no time to waste here!"

"I am in your power, and have no means of resisting you," replied Mr. Harris.

Cole Younger, in the meantime, held a revolver in young Rozier's face.

The latter was very much frightened and showed signs of running away.

"Now, don't you dare to move a step, you young devil, unless you want to see your small brains decorating the walls," remarked Cole.

"What for? I've done and can do nothing."

"Shut up! I don't want to hear another word from you!"

The young fellow could not control himself in this exciting situation, and with a bound reached the bottom of the steps.

"Halt! you son-of-a-sea-cook!" cried Cole, as he fired a bullet after the fleeing clerk, which just grazed his chin.

He got away, however, and gave the alarm to the citizens.

During this time the cashier was at the mercy of Jesse.

"Open the safe at once!" roared Jesse.

"Certainly, sir; I am compelled to obey a command which I would rather not," replied Mr. Harris, quietly.

The safe was opened and about four thousand dollars extracted from it.

"Come, Jesse," said Cole Younger; "we've got to get away. The whole town will be after us in a few minutes."

"All right, Cole; but I want this fellow to come with us."

"Oh! All right."

"Come on with us," turning to the cashier.

They walked coolly out of the bank, the cashier between them, and saw a large crowd gathering.

They continued to walk until they came to where Frank James and John Younger were holding their horses.

"Now you may return," said Jesse to Mr. Harris, "and tell those people that they have been honored by a visit from Jesse James."

"But before you go, I'd like a memento of this visit from you," saying which he relieved the cashier of his gold watch and fastened it to his own coat.

"Look sharp, there, Jesse, or we'll be too late!" Frank sang out, warningly.

"Oh, never mind me!" Jesse returned.

The crowd was approaching, and some one in it fired a shot.

The people were within speaking distance.

"Stand back there!" yelled Jesse.

"If another shot is fired by you fellows I'll put a bullet through this man's head!" and the people believed him, as they saw his revolver pressed against the cashier's forehead.

Jesse now mounted, while the other outlaws kept the cashier covered.

The strain on the man's nerves was tremendous.

When the robbers were firmly seated in their saddles they discharged their revolvers at the mob, at the same time telling the cashier to get home.

About a dozen citizens on horseback had now arrived on the scene, and a sharp interchange of firearms took place, in which the citizens "came off second best."

The latter withdrew to await reinforcements and longer range guns.

The robbers galloped away unhurt.

"So far so good; but what next, Jesse?" asked Coleman Younger, when they had gone a few miles.

"Look ahead, and you will see some more sport in sight, Cole," replied Jesse, pointing to two buggies that were approaching at a fast pace about half a mile in front of them.

"Who the devil can they be?"

"I think I know," returned Frank.

"Who, then?"

"If I am not mistaken, Governor Burbank, of Dakota, is in this neighborhood, making an inspection for some

private enterprises, and those ahead are he and his company."

"No! you don't say so?"

"Wait, and see for yourselves!"

"If that's the case, we'd better turn aside."

"Aside!" exclaimed Jesse. "Governor or no governor, whoever they are, they'll have to shell out!"

In a few minutes the two vehicles met the outlaws.

Sure enough, the party consisted of the Governor of Dakota and his followers.

This did not deter the reckless robbers.

The gentlemen did not take any particular notice of the gang, thinking them a mere party of cowboys.

The four outlaws divided themselves into two parties, the two Jameses riding on the one side of the road, and the two Youngers on the other.

"Throw up your hands, gentleman!" remarked Jesse, quietly, as he got the drop on the governor in the first buggy, while the Youngers covered the inmates of the second vehicle.

"What is the meaning of this?" angrily asked the governor. "Do you know who I am?"

"Yes, of course we do, Governor Burbank," replied Jesse, coolly; "but that doesn't matter to us."

"It would be the same to us if you were the president himself."

"We're out for the stuff, and it's all the same who gives it to us."

"I'll just trouble you to keep your mouth shut and hand my brother, there, your valuables."

"If there's any monkeying done, I'll send every mother's son of you on a longer journey than you expected to go!"

There was no mistaking Jesse's meaning.

The gentlemen were all powerless, though armed.

The revolvers of the desperadoes had them so effectually covered that the slightest opposition on their part would mean immediate death to some, if not to all.

There were six gentlemen in all, besides the governor.

Frank, with a revolver in one hand, and a satchel in the other, collected all the money and valuables to be found in the company.

CHAPTER CCVI.

A RICH HAUL.

The haul was not so great as Jesse had expected, eighteen hundred dollars in all being the amount of the booty obtained.

"I've done, Jesse," said Frank.

"All right, Frank. Now, gentlemen," remarked Jesse, blandly, "you'll oblige me by stepping out of your buggies."

"What!" exclaimed Governor Burbank; "are you dev-

ils not satisfied with robbing us of all our valuables? Do you want to deprive us of the means of further conveyance?"

"Just as the matter stands, governor, you've said just what I wanted to, so get out, and look pretty lively about it, or you'll never see Dakota again!"

The governor protested strenuously against this indignity, but what was even a governor to do when he felt the cold, threatening muzzle of a 38-calibre revolver pressing against his temples?

He was compelled to submit to his fate.

In a few minutes the party were standing disconsolately on the road.

Jesse's impudence was never exceeded before nor afterward.

"Now, governor, you and your party will kindly oblige me by relieving your horses of their harness."

And this bold outlaw actually made them take the horses out of their traces.

"Now turn those buggies into the roadside."

The gentlemen were compelled to obey.

"Take off the wheels!" commanded Jesse.

This was also done.

The governor was in a pitiful position.

It was terrible to think of such indignities being heaped upon his head by a band of lawless men.

He, however, took matters very philosophically.

As one of his companions was about to protest, he remarked:

"Hush! We are completely at the mercy of these banditti, and it would be childish folly for us to make any resistance.

"Let them take what we have, and if they wish to have our blood, let us die calmly and as men.

"To resist would mean certain death to all of us, whereas, if we acquiesce in all they wish, the chances are they will not harm us, and we shall escape, to ultimately do some good in sweeping this desperate gang of bloodthirsty murderers from the face of the earth; therefore take my advice and submit to the inevitable."

When the buggies had been thrown on the road and the wheels removed from the axles, Jesse told his brother to take the horses along with him.

"Now, gentlemen, you have had the honor of meeting with a man whom you never expected to see," remarked Jesse, sarcastically.

"When you return to your own firesides you can relate to your children that you once had the pleasure of conversing with Jesse James and his chief assistants.

"This is my brother Frank; that is Mr. Coleman Younger, and that is his brother James.

"I am Jesse James.

"I wish you a very good-day, gentlemen.

"Better success in your journeys in this State next time. Good-by."

And the daring outlaw laughed loudly as he set spurs to his horse and galloped off, followed by the other three robbers, leaving the governor and his party to get along on foot.

But the outlaws were not to escape so easily.

While Jesse had been wasting his time talking to the governor, a body of horsemen, thirteen in number, had approached within a few hundred yards.

The latter had seen the buggies "knocked down," and had immediately suspected that a daring "hold up" was taking place.

"Look, boys!" said one, who appeared to be the leader; "I really believe that luck has thrown us right on to the men we're after.

"If that's not Jesse James and some of his gang with him, then I'm a son-of-a-gun."

"By George! If it is, let us get up to them as quick as we can," said one of them.

"Look!" said another; "they seem to be going."

"They have taken the horses of the party and are riding away with them."

"You're right, Bill, they are, and they are members of the James gang.

"Hurry up, boys!"

The men put spurs to their horses and hastened after the robbers, who were leisurely continuing their way, unmindful of the danger behind them.

They were splitting their sides with laughter at the idea of having held up a governor of a State.

Suddenly Jesse's sharp ears heard the clatter-patter, clatter-patter of many hoofs.

Turning round in his saddle, he saw the pursuing horsemen only a few hundred yards away.

"Devil and blazes!" he exclaimed.

"Pards, look behind; we've got some detectives on our track, and they are even better mounted than we are!"

"Yes," said Frank, "those are the men that Pinkerton has sent down after us.

"Away, boys, as fast as we can!"

"I'll be hanged if that fellow in front isn't Jim Dayton," angrily yelled Jesse.

"What a pity we've got no Winchesters!"

"Never mind; we can't fight them now. Away to the cave! If we can't all get there together, separate, collect some of the others, send them round to the cave, for a big fight is before us," breathlessly ejaculated Jesse, as all four went thundering along, with the detectives in hot pursuit.

CHAPTER CCVII.

A HOT CHASE.

"Ride for your lives, boys; they have seen us and will yet escape!" yelled Detective Jim Dayton to his companions.

"On, on, pards; give the horses whip and spur. That devil, Dayton, will yet be our ruin!" cried Jesse.

And the outlaws flew over the ground.

Twack! twack! came the cut of the whips on the flanks of the pursuing detectives' horses.

There was only a distance of about three hundred yards between pursuers and pursued.

The outlaws' quadrupeds were overworked; those of the detectives' fresh and strong.

As each mile was left behind it was quite obvious that the detectives were gaining.

"Boys," exclaimed Jesse, "it will be impossible for us to keep this up much longer, the pace is too fast; our horses are giving out."

"Mine is almost dead beat," said Frank.

It was the same with the other horses.

"Let us halt and fight them," remarked Cole, boldly.

"No, not yet!" replied Jesse. "Let us try to gain some place of shelter first."

"Every one of those behind is a dead shot and just as daring as we are, and Dayton fears nothing. Ride on, ride on!"

And on they thundered.

Four men fleeing from death, twelve seeking to cause it.

All depended upon the fleetness and endurance of a few dumb animals.

"Their horses are becoming tired," remarked one of the detectives.

"Yes, we've got them this time; only let us push ahead before night overtakes us," said another.

"Well, we can't go any faster," returned the first.

"Another mile will give them into our power," called out Dayton.

"Get your shooters ready, all of you; those fellows will fight like very devils!"

"I think we are near enough to try a shot at them now," remarked a third.

"All right, give them a volley!"

Each fired a flying shot at the fugitives, which, however, fell short.

"Wait a while, boys, before you fire again," commanded Dayton.

Ten minutes later they essayed again to hit the robbers.

The bullets came nearer this time.

The outlaws turned in their saddles and sent a volley whizzing at their pursuers, but without effect.

The sun had already sunk, and night was beginning to set in.

Still the hardy outlaws' steeds held out, though gradually becoming weaker and weaker.

The detectives' horses were likewise beginning to show signs of the unusual strain on their muscles.

"Ah!" exclaimed Jesse, pointing to a small clump of trees a quarter of a mile ahead, "let us reach that place and we may be able to throw off these bloodhounds!"

"For Heaven's sake, boys," cried out Jim Dayton,

"don't let them reach those trees or they'll get away from us yet!"

"Fire away at the beggars!" yelled Jesse.

Bang, bang! It came from both sides.

One of the detectives was hit on a shoulder; another had his horse shot down.

This caused a slight delay, during which the outlaws had reached the clump of trees.

"Dismount and send your horses ahead," commanded Jesse.

His command was obeyed in a second.

The horses, of course, made for the farm where they belonged.

The detectives could hear the tramp, tramp, tramp, of the outlaws' galloping horses, though they could not now see them.

They followed up the sound.

"We fooled them that time," Jim Younger remarked, as the detectives hurried past.

"Yes, but it won't be for long," returned Jesse. "They'll soon find out their mistake and return to hunt us up; let us take advantage of the opportunity to escape."

"Where to?" asked Cole.

"To the cave, of course; we can't go home."

"But they'll intercept us before we can reach it," said Frank, "and besides, I'm in favor of going straight to the farm."

"Why?" asked his brother.

"I don't know, but something tells me that these devils mean harm to the old woman."

"By Heaven! If I thought so, I'd after them this minute," said Jesse, as his eyes flashed an angry, murderous look. "But I don't think they'd dare do anything to mother. No, Frank, she's safe enough, and knows how to protect herself."

"Let us get out of this as soon as we can, unless we wish to be caught," Cole Younger warned.

"Yes, get ahead," said Jesse.

"Got anything to eat, anybody?" asked Jim Younger.

"No, none of us have any food with us, but I have got a bottle of whisky; here it is, help yourselves," replied Jesse.

They were all hungry, not having eaten a bit all day.

They wandered all night through the forest, with the exception of two hours spent in sleep.

They were making their way to the cave as quickly as they could.

The next day became very wet, and they were drenched to the skin.

They were cold, hungry and tired, and in this miserable condition they were obliged to rest a few hours.

CHAPTER CCVIII.

TRACKED TO THE CAVE.

Jesse James and Cole Younger went to sleep first, while Frank James and Jim Younger kept watch.

The poor fellows were so thoroughly tired, however, that they also fell asleep.

Half an hour passed when a solitary rider approached. He was one of the Pinkerton detectives.

The latter soon discovered the trick that the outlaws had played upon them.

"The best thing for us to do," advised Jim Dayton, "is to separate and search the whole forest; they must be in it. We'll all be close together, so in the case of any one seeing the murderers he can imitate the whistling of a whip-poor-will, and the others who may hear will repeat the call, so that we can soon assemble."

And this plan was agreed upon.

When the above-mentioned detective, whose name was Willis, saw the four men lying asleep at a little distance, he knew them to be the outlaws.

He was a very ambitious and daring young fellow.

He dismounted, tied his horse to a tree and cautiously approached.

"By George!" he exclaimed, "they are snoring for a wagger."

"They are dead tired and fast asleep."

"Shall I call for assistance?"

"No, it would only waken them, and I can capture them myself!"

He could already hear his praise extolled in every mouth.

He could already see visions of wealth and fame that would accrue to him, for, single-handed, taking these four notorious murderers prisoners.

Softly and carefully he crept up to the sleeping outlaws.

He stood within a few feet of them.

Gently he uncoiled a roll of rope and two pairs of handcuffs which he carried with him.

The four men were stretched out on their backs with their hands resting on their breasts.

Frank James and Cole Younger were lying nearest to the detective.

It was a piece of reckless daring for this young man to attempt to capture such desperadoes, although they were asleep; but the reward was great, and he determined to risk his life in the attempt.

As gently as a snake gliding through the grass, the detective knelt down beside Frank James.

Click! went the handcuffs around Frank's big wrists.

The detective's heart stopped throbbing with suppressed excitement.

He looked around.

Not one of the sleepers had been disturbed.

With a sigh of relief he bent over Cole Younger now.

Again he succeeded as before.

"Oh! that I had two more pairs of handcuffs," he muttered to himself.

He now stepped back a few paces and quietly cut the rope in halves.

He then arranged each piece so that it formed a loop.

It was his intention to cast one end of each rope around the limb of a tree near at hand, then throw the loops over each head and draw taut immediately.

He crept softly to the limb and arranged the ends as intended.

With a catlike movement he neared the remaining two outlaws.

He was just about to stoop over Jesse as Frank turned in his sleep.

In doing so his manacled hands struck the handcuffed one of Cole Younger.

The sound was inconsiderable, but the detective

stepped back and quickly had his revolver out, while he gazed sharply at the two men he had just handcuffed.

Apparently not one of the sleepers had been disturbed. Willis waited quietly for about a minute.

He then stooped over Frank and Coleman, and was satisfied by their loud breathing that they still slept soundly.

That stooping was a fatal mistake.

He suddenly fell prostrate over the two handcuffed men, felled by a terrific blow over the head.

It was Jesse James who had struck him.

"Take that, you sneak!" he yelled. "Up, boys!"

In a moment all the outlaws were on their feet.

"What the devil's the meaning of this?" asked Frank and Cole, as they viewed the handcuffs on their wrists.

"It means this," replied Jesse, "some slight sound awoke me, to find that fellow with a revolver in his hand, pointed at you, Frank."

"I suppose you must have caused the noise by turning over."

"Had you opened your eyes you would have been killed where you lay."

"I saw him stoop over you."

"I got up softly and sneaked behind him."

"With a blow from my pistol I knocked him senseless before he could turn round again, and thus saved your life, and most likely all our lives."

"By the boots, but that was a close call!" remarked Cole, as he shamefacedly looked down at his manacled hands.

"Close one for us all," replied Frank. "But how the devil did he manage to get us so easily?"

"Weren't you two keeping watch?" Cole asked of Frank and his brother.

"That's what I want to know, too," said Jesse.

"Well, to tell you the truth, we were so tired and we thought ourselves so safe that we fell asleep before we knew what we were doing."

"A fine thing to do," Jesse angrily remarked. "If you were in the army you would be shot for it."

"What a nice thing for us to be awakened and find ourselves prisoners!"

"Frank, Jim, I'm ashamed of you."

The two men looked ashamed, too.

"But let this be a lesson to you in the future."

"Get the keys of those bracelets out of that cur's pocket and unfasten them, Jim!"

Jim did as he was bid, and a moment later Frank and Cole were once more free.

"What are we going to do with this fellow—shoot him?" asked Cole.

"No," replied Jesse, "that won't do."

"Why not?"

"Because you may be sure that some more of those sleuthhounds are lurking about; he wouldn't dare be here alone, although the way he went to work with us shows that he's got grit enough for a dozen such men."

"In fact, I would sooner let him go for being so plucky."

"What? You wouldn't be such a fool, Jesse?" questioned Frank, surprised.

"Well, I'm going to give him a chance for his life, anyway."

"How so?"

"Reach me those handcuffs and you'll see."

Jesse handcuffed the still unconscious detective.

This finished, he carried him to a tree, tied him with his own ropes to it, and robbed him of all he possessed in money, papers and jewelry.

Having accomplished this much, he took out a slip of paper and wrote the following on it with a lead pencil:

CAUTION!

Let all detectives and other sleuthhounds beware! This man is an example of our power. We let him live because we respect his bravery, although we are outlaws. Any one who attempts to hunt us down shall fare worse.

Beware! Take Heed!!

JESSE JAMES, FOR THE GANG.

The slip was pinned to the detective's coat.

They left him thus and continued on their way.

CHAPTER CCIX.

THE DETECTIVES' PLOT.

"Jesse, I want to go home," said Frank, as the outlaws were nearing their cave.

"What for, Frank?"

"I can't get over the feeling that those detectives mean harm to mother."

"If that's the case, Frank, let us go home."

"Cole and Jim can go to the cave and rest there a while."

"Here, Cole, take half this boodle, and divide it between you and Jim."

"All right, old man; but if you fear anything at the farm, let us accompany you."

"No, you go to the cave. If we want you we can easily send for you; besides, I think it would be better all round if we should separate for a while."

"Right you be, Jesse. I was just thinking of going down to the Cherokee to see my girl."

"All right, go ahead, and good luck."

The Youngers then separated from the Jameses, and went to the cave to rest for a few days, while Jesse and Frank sought the old homestead.

They were so weak, however, from hunger and cold that they made very little progress.

They came to a farmhouse on the roadside.

"Let us go in, Frank, and see what they've got to eat."

"Go ahead, Jesse, I'm starving."

A few minutes later they entered the farmhouse.

Their dilapidated appearance frightened the old couple that were inside.

"Have you got anything good to eat, lady? We are famished," Jesse remarked.

The old woman looked at them suspiciously, but their hungry looks prevented the harsh reply she was about to give.

"Yes, I think I ken git yer something. Would bacon an' eggs suit yer?"

"Certainly," replied Jesse, "and here's something to repay you for your trouble," and he threw down a ten-dollar gold piece.

"Keep yer money; we doan't want no pay fur a bite nor a sup," said the old man.

The Jameses made no reply to this, but fell to eating the bread and butter which the old woman had already placed upon the table.

They were soon enjoying a good country meal with a ravishing appetite.

When they had satisfied the inner man, Frank threw down another ten-dollar gold piece, and they both left for the farmhouse on the hill, which they reached a few hours later.

After the usual greetings had been interchanged between mother and sons, the latter wished, of course, to hear what had happened in their absence.

"Well, mother, how have things been going on at home since we left?" asked Jesse.

"Very bad, indeed, Jesse."

"How is that, mother?"

"Detectives and other sneakin' curs have been round here every day almost."

"Only the day before yesterday, just after your horses came home in such a terrible state, eight detectives, headed by that beggar, Dayton, were here."

"They searched all over the place, house, barn, and everything."

"They threatened to arrest me unless I told them where you were hidin'."

"They didn't do so, however."

"That Dayton was goin' ter do all sorts o' things to me."

"He wanted to find out all about George, but he could get nothin' outer me."

"That reminds me," interrupted Jesse, "where is the boy?"

"Oh, he's all right. I sent him away three days ago to my sister's, but he'll be back to-day; in fact, I expect him any minute."

"There he comes, Jesse," said Frank, pointing to the boy as he was seen approaching the house.

He was received right royally by the two Jameses, but, on the other hand, he seemed very cool himself.

In fact, it appeared as if he desired to shun their company, and a heavy, thoughtful brow told that he had been thinking over some serious subject.

Jesse noticed this, and divined the cause at once.

"What is the matter with you, George?" he asked.

George was a brave lad, who always wished to have everything clearly explained.

"I want to know why you call me brother, when I'm not your brother at all," he replied, boldly.

"Who the devil has put such nonsense into your head?" Jesse questioned, angrily.

"It's been that Dayton, hasn't it?"

"Yes, it has; and I think he's right."

Jesse grew white with rage.

"What! you devilish young cub!" he yelled. "How dare you say so?"

Becoming calmer on a hint from his mother, Jesse proceeded in a softer strain.

"George, my boy, that devil, Dayton, is my worst enemy, and he will do anything to injure me."

"He has filled your head with a parcel of his nonsense, and you must not believe a word he says. Any pain that he can cause me he will inflict."

"I don't believe it," the boy resolutely replied.

Jesse's temper was fast approaching white heat, but the young lad remained undaunted.

"George, I want no more of this nonsense from you;

if I hear it again, I'll take you away to the Indian Territory."

"I don't care what you do.

"I want to go back to my father, though, and go I shall as soon as I get a chance."

"You will, will you?"

"Yes, I will," the boy replied, defiantly.

Jesse was about to spring at the young lad and deal him a terrible blow, and there's no telling what might have happened had not something of great importance intervened.

"By Heavens, Jesse, look!" Frank exclaimed, excitedly.

Jesse looked out through the window and saw eight riders approaching, all heavily armed.

"Pinkerton's detectives, and that son of Satan, Dayton, at their head!" cried Jesse, as he recognized the men who had been pursuing him for the last few days.

CHAPTER CCX.

THE TRAGEDY AT THE JAMES HOME.

The detectives were approaching in a slow, determined fashion, and with grim, earnest faces, which told how serious they understood their present actions to be.

"Get our Winchesters down at once, mother, and load all the revolvers you can lay hands on, and be quick about it," called out Jesse.

"We'll give those beggars a warmer reception than they have bargained for, although they do look like business."

The detectives were about four hundred yards away.

Besides their revolvers they had also supplied themselves with Winchesters.

Jesse and Frank opened up fire on them.

Mrs. Samuels did the loading, while the boy, George, sullenly sat in a corner and did not interfere one way or another.

Jesse told him to load some of the weapons, but he steadfastly refused.

"Load those guns, or I'll put a bullet through you for your impudence!" Jesse exclaimed, angrily.

"I'll do no such thing. Shoot away; I don't care," replied George, bravely.

"Never mind the boy, Jesse," said Frank, "we've got something more serious to attend to now."

Jesse followed his advice.

The two brothers kept up a steady fire on the detectives, who continued to draw closer around the homestead.

They began to scatter themselves about, and it was not so easy to get a good shot at them.

"Confound them!" ejaculated Frank, "I only wish they'd keep together."

The detectives were now firing from all directions at the house.

The bullets stuck in the solid wood walls.

Jesse and Frank fired whenever they could catch sight of a part of the body of man or horse.

Fusillade after fusillade came from both parties.

Nearer and nearer drew the detectives.

Mrs. Samuels was perspiring and begrimed with

powder and powder smoke as she loaded the weapons, one after the other.

Two of the detectives showed up in the middle of the road leading to the homestead.

Piff, paff! two bullets came simultaneously from the outlaws' rifles.

Down dropped horses and riders.

The latter were soon on their feet again, for they were uninjured, although their horses were killed.

No sooner had they sprang to their feet than the Winchesters of the outlaws rang out again.

Both men were hit, although not seriously, but yet badly enough to be incapacitated from doing further work.

Crash, smash! came several bullets from the detectives through the windows.

The latter seemed to be the target for which they were principally aiming.

Shot after shot crashed through the windowpanes, which were now all shattered.

Grim, and with teeth firmly set, the two outlaws continued to fire.

Suddenly a detective appeared within a hundred yards of the house.

He was quickly running from tree to tree so as to get nearer the homestead.

Jesse's sharp eyes espied him.

Bang! went his rifle.

The man dropped the weapon he was carrying, placed both hands over his breast, reeled backward, and fell dead, with a bullet through his heart.

"Well hit, Jesse!" exclaimed Frank, as he saw the man fall.

"Yes, that one is done for," grimly replied his younger brother.

Mrs. Samuels was protected from any chance shot by a barricade behind which she continued to load her sons' deadly weapons with a fierce delight that disgraced her sex.

Jesse and Frank, however, were often exposed, but, marvelous to relate, they never received a scratch, so far, although the bullets whizzed past their heads continually.

"How is the ammunition, mother?" asked Jesse.

"Oh, we've got enough to last a year yet," she replied.

"All right, then, keep on loading, unless you get too tired."

"Oh, I'm not tired a bit; besides, this does me good," she responded, as she partook of a long drink of strong whisky.

She handed the bottle over to her sons, and they also regaled themselves with a long draught of the illicit brewing.

Just as Jesse had the bottle to his lips, a bullet came crashing through the last whole pane, and smashed the bottle in his hand.

The flying pieces of glass cut him about the face and hands rather severely, but he took no notice of it.

Quietly wiping the flowing blood from his face with his bloody and powder-stained hands, which gave him a hideous look, he continued to fire on the detectives.

Two of the latter had already been severely wounded and one killed.

This made them act more cautiously.

Their plan was to approach from all sides and make a rush simultaneously on the Jameses and overpower them by their superior numbers.

The outlaws suspected as much, and were on the alert.

As soon as a head showed itself, a bullet was dispatched at it.

One of the remaining detectives was rash enough to show himself, and a bullet from Jesse's rifle crashed through his shoulder, and he fell unconscious to the earth.

The excitement was intense among the detectives, whereas the outlaws blazed away as coolly as if they were firing at a target.

Half only of the detectives remained to fight against the two dauntless brothers.

Dayton saw that it was useless to continue the fight without further assistance.

It was absurd for only four men in the open to fight against two such men as the Jameses when they were protected by the shelter of the house.

Dayton drew back and called the other detectives to a consultation.

"It is impossible for us to do anything the way we are fighting now," he remarked.

"Four of our men are done for, and none of us know who's to be next. Have any of you any plan to propose?"

"Yes," replied one.

"What is it?"

"I've got a hand grenade here; let one of us creep up to the house and throw it in through the window.

"It will explode and most likely set fire to the house, when Jesse and Frank will be compelled to come out.

"When they do, we four can easily manage them."

"I don't favor that plan at all," Dayton remarked.

"It is a cowardly thing to do, and besides I am sure Mrs. Samuels is in the house and the boy, George Lover, for whose capture, you know, I am principally working."

But Jim Dayton's objections were overruled by the others, and it was determined to throw the hand grenade into the house, with the intention of forcing the outlaws to come out and fight or surrender.

The man who had proposed the plan volunteered to throw the missile.

Getting down on his stomach he sneaked up to within about twenty yards of the house, and hid himself behind a small pile of wood.

The other detectives had kept up a steady fire on the outlaws so as to detract attention from the detective who was about to perform a cruel act.

The detective raised himself cautiously, the prepared grenade poised in his hand for throwing.

Suddenly he stood up a moment, and sent it flying through the window.

There was a loud report and a terrific scream.

The cruel grenade had worked terrible havoc.

Mrs. Samuels' arm was torn away from the shoulder and she fell senseless to the floor.

The poor boy, George, the one whom Jesse James had kidnaped, lay dead on the floor, horribly mutilated. Just as a new life was opening up for the child, just as he began to have hopes of a future happy life by

the side of a fond father, a cruel plan cut short his youthful life.

Jesse and Frank were speechless at first as they viewed the terrible scene.

They soon recovered, however, and both outlaws sprang toward their mother with a yell of despair.

She was not dead, however, though very badly injured.

The brothers set to work with tears in their eyes to stop the flow of blood.

In this they succeeded.

Turning to George, they saw he was past all human aid.

Jesse and Frank gnashed their teeth in the madness of their rage.

"I swear," cried Jesse, "to have revenge for this dastardly outrage!

"Woe to the cowardly wretches who have done this deed!

"Jesse James lives for nothing now but to avenge.

"Death, death to all sleuthhounds!"

Frank raved in a similar manner.

They flew to their posts again and began firing at random in their rage.

The detectives had expected to see the house on fire, but they were disappointed.

They did not return the outlaws' fire, but retired for further assistance.

When the brothers heard no response to their shots they left the house to search for the detectives.

They met several neighbors who had been attracted by the firing, who told Jesse that the detectives had gone for further help.

They cautioned Jesse and Frank to leave the district.

When the news of the terrible deed became known a widespread sympathy arose for the outlaws.

The mother was removed and placed in kindly hands.

The poor unfortunate lad was given a decent burial.

The detectives soon collected a large posse, and they returned to the attack.

The brothers were informed of this fact, however, in good time, and made their escape.

When Dayton was told of the tragedy that the hand-grenade had caused, he was heartily ashamed of the deed, and his sorrow was real and deep for the father, Colonel Lover.

He left Cass County to inform the bereaved parent of George's demise, and was so disgusted at the cruelty of the outrage and that his name was connected with it, that he resigned his position of detective, and lived a quiet life thereafter.

Jesse and Frank James were said to have escaped to California.

Where they went is unknown.

No news of the gang could be heard from any quarter.

They had mysteriously disappeared.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Next week's JESSE JAMES STORIES, No. 37, will contain the story of Jesse James' Narrowest Escape. A thrilling account of the chase of the famous bandit by a score of brave detectives.

Send in your exchange notices, boys. We will publish them all in a special "Exchange Department."

ABOUT FAMOUS MEN.

Boys, turn to page 32 and see the announcement of the new Contest.

Everybody is to have another try at the valuable prizes offered. Don't miss this opportunity, but send in your article at once.

Following are some of the best articles received during the week.

Read them, and then send in your own!

Stories About Lincoln.

(By William Kerr, Pennsylvania.)

Lincoln was born in Kentucky in 1809, in a little old log house. He had nothing to write with, so he took a piece of a shingle and a piece of charred wood. He was very fond of books, and once he borrowed a few books from a neighbor, and, spoiling one, he had to work two weeks to pay for it.

When he moved to Indiana his father sold all his furniture for two barrels of whisky, and while moving on a raft the raft upset and he lost his whisky. Lincoln was an honest and upright man. Once while he was clerking in a store he made a mistake of a few cents, and walked several miles to fix up. When a boy he worked on the farm the best part of his time and did not get very much schooling.

While yet young he belonged to the American army in the war with Mexico, and in one battle, seeing that the enemy were getting the best of it he asked permission to advance with some men and a cannon, and he forced his way into a church in the enemy's rear, and poured shots into them till they ran in great confusion and disorder.

When Lincoln was elected President it made considerable confusion in the South, the people thinking that he would stop slavery at once, but this was not so, though he did not like to see the people having slaves.

He took his oath as President March 4, 1861. Soon after, the Civil War broke out which he handled with great ability.

Mr. Lincoln was seated in a box in a theatre when John Wilkes Booth slipped in behind him and shot him in the back of the head. Then Booth, while making his way out of the box, caught his leg in the American flag and he fell, breaking his leg. He limped out of the theatre, and leaped on a horse which was in waiting for him, and made his escape. Booth thought he was doing a great thing for the South by killing the President.

After Lincoln was shot he was carried to a nearby house, where he died, and the next day the flags were at halfmast all over the nation. Booth was followed to a barn in Virginia, where he was killed by Lieutenant L. B. Baker.

Captain John Smith.

(By Miles Burns, Massachusetts.)

The life and actions of this extraordinary man resembles the deeds of a hero of romance.

In the early part of his career he had the command of a body of cavalry in the Austrian army, and, during a

contest with the Turks, was taken prisoner, and sent as a slave to Constantinople, from which he afterward obtained his release and returned to England. His romantic and enterprising spirit led him to engage in an expedition to the New World, and, by his superior abilities the colony was repeatedly rescued from the brink of ruin. The singular adventures of Captain Smith form a conspicuous portion of the history of the colony. On one occasion, while exploring the country, he was taken prisoner by a band of 200 Indians, but charmed with his valor and the various arts which he used to astonish or please them, they released him from captivity.

After this he was again taken by a party of 300, who led him before Powhatan in triumph. The sentence of death was immediately pronounced against him, and he was conducted to the place of execution. His head was laid upon a stone, and the savages, with uplifted clubs, were about to dispatch their victim when Pocohontas, the favorite daughter of Powhatan, threw herself between the prisoner, and by her tears and entreaties prevailed upon her father to recall his sentence. Her prayers were heard, and Smith was set at liberty.

In 1609 Captain Smith, in consequence of an injury received by an accidental explosion of gunpowder, was obliged to return to England for medical aid, where he died a few years later.

Gen. Robert E. Lee.

(By Edgar S. Poore, Richmond, Va.)

Robert Edmund Lee, the most distinguished Confederate general, was born in Virginia in 1806, and died in 1870. He was the son of General Henry Lee, the famous "Light Horse Harry." He was graduated at West Point in 1829 at the head of his class. He displayed his great ability, and was employed in the most responsible positions even during the times of peace, and when war was declared with Mexico he was appointed chief engineer. The professional ability and personal bravery there displayed added new laurels to his fame, and rapidly won him the brevets of major, lieutenant-colonel, and colonel. At the close of the war he was recognized by the army as the fitting successor of General Scott whenever the latter should retire from the head of the army.

A letter written to his sister after the secession of Virginia plainly indicates his feeling in regard to the Civil War, and sets forth his reason for giving his services to the Confederate cause. Perhaps some of my readers would like to hear what he had to say. Here it is: "Now we are in a state of war which will yield to

nothing. The whole South is in a state of revolution, into which Virginia, after a long struggle, has been drawn, and though I recognize no necessity for this state of things, and would have forborne and pleaded to the end for redress of grievances, real or supposed, yet in my own person I had to meet the question whether I would take part against my native State. With all my devotion to the Union, and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, and my home. I have, therefore, resigned my commission in the army, and, save in the defense of my native State, with the hope that my poor services will never be needed, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword."

During the first year of the war, although one of five generals appointed by the Confederate Congress, Lee was kept in the background, but on his appointment as commander-in-chief, in 1862, new life was infused into the armies under him, and that energy which never fagged to the bitter end began to make itself felt. Although outnumbered—sometimes by more than two to one—he kept up the unequal fight for three years, and in the battles during that period usually inflicted far heavier losses than he received. Probably not even Napoleon was so devotedly loved by his soldiers as was Lee, and under his command they were almost invincible.

The war left him homeless and penniless, and he gladly accepted the presidency of what is now called the "Washington and Lee University at Lexington, Va., a position which he filled with great fidelity during the remainder of his life.

"The greatest gift the hero leaves his race
Is to have been a hero."

How General Putnam Fooled the Enemy.

(By John Brenner, Albany, N. Y.)

During the Revolution a stronghold called Horseneck, some miles above New York, was in the possession of the British. Putnam, with a few sturdy patriots, was lurking in the vicinity, bent on driving them from the place. Tired of lying in ambush, the men became impatient and importuned the general with questions as to when they were going to have a bout with the foe. One morning he made a speech which convinced them that something was in the wind.

"Fellers, you've been idle too long, and so have I. I'm going down to Bush's at Horseneck in an hour with an ox team and a load of corn; if I come back I will let you know all the particulars; if I should not, let 'em have it, by the hokey."

He shortly afterward mounted his ox cart dressed as one of the commonest order of Yankee farmers, and was soon at Bush's tavern, which was in possession of the British troops. No sooner did the officers espy him than they began to question him as to his whereabouts, and finding him a complete simpleton (as they thought), they began to quiz him and threatened to seize his corn and fodder.

"How much do you ask for your whole consarn?" asked they.

"For marcy sake, gentlemen," replied the mock clod-

hopper, with the most deplorable look, "only let me off and you shall have my hull team and load for nothing, and if that won't dew I'll give you my word I'll return to-morrow and pay you heartily for your kindness and condescension."

"Well," said they, "we'll take you at your word. Leave the team with us, and we won't require any bail for your appearance."

Putnam gave up his team and sauntered about an hour or so, gaining all the information that he wished. He then returned to his men, and told them of the disposition of the foe and his plan of attack. The morning came, and with it started out the gallant band. The British were handled with rough hands, and when they surrendered to General Putnam, the clodhopper, he remarked:

"Gentlemen, I have only kept my word. I told you that I would call and pay you for your kindness and condescension."

How Kit Carson Managed a Bully.

(By Donald Wilson, Pennsylvania.)

One time, when Kit Carson was with a party of men, there was a Frenchman among them by the name of Shuman, known as a bully. He was dangerous when intoxicated, and Carson had feared he would make trouble, and he tried to get rid of him. But the Frenchman grew worse every day. One day Shuman was boasting of his exploits, and was particularly insolent, and insulting against all Americans. Carson heard all, and he immediately stepped forward and said:

"I am an American, the most inconsiderable one among them, but if you wish to die say another word against the Americans."

Shuman defied him. He was sitting on his horse with a loaded rifle in his hand. Carson leaped upon his horse with a loaded pistol. They both fired almost at the same time, but Carson a little ahead. Shuman's ball just grazed Carson's cheek. Carson's ball entered Shuman's hand, and came out at the wrist. The bully begged for his life, and it was spared and from that time Americans were never insulted by him.

General Richard Montgomery.

(By R. M. James, Kentucky.)

Ireland has given many gallant soldiers to the armies of the world, but none was more worthy of honor than the brave Montgomery, who fell fighting for American liberty at Quebec.

Richard Montgomery, the son of a member of the British Parliament, was born December 2, 1736, at Feltrim, Ireland. He received a good education, finishing at Trinity College, Dublin.

He entered the English army at 18, and in 1757 was ordered to Halifax with his regiment. The young soldier took part in the siege of Louisburg under command of the brilliant general, James Wolf. After serving in the campaign which terminated in England's acquiring possession of Canada, he went to the West Indies, re-

turning to New York in 1763. About this time he paid a visit to England, where he sympathized with the liberal political principles of Charles James Fox, Edmund Burke and Isaac Barre. Giving up his commission in the army, he returned to America, bought a farm at Kingsbridge, in what is now New York City, and married a daughter of Judge Robert R. Livingston. Besides the farm he purchased a fine place on the Hudson, but spent the greater part of his married life near Rhinebeck, N. Y., on an estate belonging to his wife. He was a delegate to the First Provincial Congress, held in New York City in 1775. In June of the same year he accepted an appointment as brigadier-general in the Continental Army. Appointed to serve under General Schuyler, the colonists opened their campaign against Canada, Schuyler's illness gave Montgomery actual command. He captured the fortresses of St. John, Chambly and Montreal. Joining his little army of 300 men with the forces of Benedict Arnold, he attempted the capture of Quebec. Before the battle he was made a major-general. He led his forces to the assault upon the city with the words:

"Men of New York, you will not fear to follow where your general leads."

The attack failed and Montgomery was killed and was buried near the spot where he fell. A grateful country brought his body to New York in 1818 and laid it in St. Paul's churchyard, where a stately monument was erected to his memory.

How Abraham Lincoln Helped a Pig.

(By Charles A. Leavitt, Quincy, Mass.)

Abraham Lincoln was an honest and kind-hearted man, and at the time of his death all the North and most of the South wept.

One time when he was going off on horseback he had to go through a field. There happened to be a pig stuck in the mud by a ditch, which he had to go over. He had a new homespun suit of clothes on, but he was so kind-hearted that he got off of his horse and helped the pig out and got his suit all mud, but he didn't care for that.

TALES OF HUNTING AND TRAPPING.

TRAPPED.

BY CHARLES FROST.

Beaver Creek was one of the best fishing places I ever knew. It was an insignificant, narrow, little stream, its whole length not being more than two or three miles, but it was full of broad, deep pools that swarmed with big sunfish, catfish, chubs, suckers, pike and bass. Not many streams can boast of such a variety, and it is little wonder we boys always preferred Beaver Creek to the broader, deeper waters of the Conewago, or the Yellowbreeches. I can never forget one particular Saturday afternoon that I spent there—an afternoon which to this day I recall with a shudder.

I had been looking forward to that fishing trip for a whole week.

I had a can of nice fat, black worms, and when I started off after dinner I felt like shouting for joy.

For some reason or other (I don't recall why it was,) nobody went with me that day. I am inclined to think, however, I was as well satisfied, for I admit that, regarding fishing, I was always a little selfish.

It was three miles from home to Bender's sawmill, where the best fishing waters began, and this distance I covered in considerably less than an hour.

From Bender's down to the point where Beaver Creek empties in the Conewago is just as wild and lonesome a bit of country as you could find outside of the York barrens.

The stream circled in and out among huge rocks, gray and moss-grown, that towered high over the water, at some places, and at others lay piled up in heaps in the bed of the creek. Steep hills stretched on both sides dense with pine and spruce.

I followed up the bed of the stream for nearly a mile, dropping a line here and there, and lifting an occasional sunfish or a big chub. Then the channel became too rough and obstructed for even me to climb, and making a detour through a dense tangle of loose stone and blackberry thickets, I came out at the very finest spot on the whole length of Beaver Creek.

The water filtered through a natural dam of big rocks and fallen timber into a deep pool about thirty feet square.

Along both sides ran a flat ledge of rocks about two feet above the water, and the trees, arching at the top, made it a perfect grotto of shade and coolness. I fas-

tened a big worm on the hook in tempting coils, and cast it with a trembling hand into the very center of the pool.

The faint ripples had scarcely died away on the edge when a tremendous tug sent a thrill through every nerve, and the sharp resistance that met my effort to pull out told me I had hooked a perfect beauty.

The struggle was brief and glorious. Once I thought I had lost my prize, but the hook held firm, and presently I was bending with delight over a plump bass that could not have weighed less than two pounds.

I put him on a stringer and fastened to the branch of a pine tree, for I was afraid to trust my prize in the water.

Then I threw in again, and waited for another bite. My hand trembled so with excitement that the rod shook, and I expected every moment another strike.

But as none came I grew uneasy. Perhaps the bait was out of order, I thought, or possibly the hook was fast on the bottom.

I began to pull up and sure enough the line was fast. In those days a hook was too valuable an article to risk losing, so I slid the rod behind me until I could grasp the line with my hands, and then began to pull steadily. At the very first effort I felt something yield, and, as the line came out inch by inch, with a heavy resistance, I concluded the hook was caught in a stone or water-logged bit of wood.

In a moment more I saw a dark shadow under the surface, and then, with one last tug, I brought to view, not a stone or a log, but a square tin box with a brass handle and lock.

It was very heavy, but I dragged it safely to the top of the ledge, and a moment later the mystery was explained in a way that took my breath away.

Only a week previous a farmer named Abbott, who resided near Bender's sawmill, had been robbed of a tin box containing all his savings in gold. The thief was supposed to be a tramp who had been seen lurking in the neighborhood, but in spite of a close search no trace of him had been discovered.

This was the stolen money at my feet, and the thief who had sunk it in the depths of the pool was probably hiding among the rocks in the vicinity until all danger of capture was over.

I was not slow to perceive my own danger, but I determined to hold on to the money at any cost. I glanced on all sides, and then listened sharply for a moment, but all was quiet save the loud beating of my heart.

In less than a minute my tackle was put up, and taking rod and fish in one hand, the precious box in the

other, I made tracks for Bender's sawmill as fast as I could go.

In order to cut off the most rugged part of the valley I circled back along the slope of the hill.

Above me rose a jagged heap of loose boulders, with dark caverns, showing here and there on the gray surface, and glancing up in sudden fright caused by the sharp crack of a dead limb, I observed a roughly-clad, unshaven man standing at the entrance to one of these caves a few yards distant. The surprise was mutual. His sharp gaze scanned me closely, and then I saw his eyes flash.

"You young varmint!" he cried; "drop that box; do you hear me?"

My determination was formed in an instant.

If it was a possible thing, I meant to save that money, and dropping rod and fish—not without a pang at the thought of that two-pound bass—I turned and plunged among the rocks and bushes. I heard his wrathful cry as he started in pursuit, but it only nerved me to greater efforts.

I formed my plans of escape while I ran.

To follow up the rugged course of the stream to the mill would bring certain capture.

My only hope lay in crossing the creek and gaining the top of the thickly-wooded ridge. The summit was comparatively open, and if I was fleet of foot I might reach Bender's in safety.

All this passed through my mind in an instant as I dashed over stones and fallen timber toward the water. I struck the creek at a bad place. It was literally full of huge upright boulders, and the water at their base was deep.

To wade it would be too perilous, so I dashed at the slanting surface of a huge rock and pulled myself to the flat top by means of the moss and crevices. It was ten or twelve feet above the water, and separated by a gap scarcely two feet wide was another huge boulder, on the other side of which the water was shallow and offered a means of safety. As I pulled myself to my feet, I heard the bushes crack behind me, and a fierce command to stop, embellished by an execration, shouted in my ears. This startled me. My pursuer was closer at hand than I had supposed.

I made a leap at the small chasm between the two great boulders, and probably through nervousness—I can't account for it in any other way—I missed my aim and dropped down between them. I felt a sharp jerk about my neck and shoulders, the tin box dropped to the water, and then I realized what had happened. I had stuck midway to the bottom, in a narrow space between the two rocks. My head was about six feet from the top, and my feet were a little nearer the water. My back was wedged fast, and I was unable to move my arms.

The pain was excruciating, and as I uttered a sharp cry a shadow flitting across my eyes told me the scamp was on top of the rock.

"Caught in your own trap, you young rascal," said he; "serves you right, too; hand up that box, quick!"

The absurdity of the demand must have suddenly struck him, for I heard him chuckle softly.

Then the footsteps receded over the rock, and I wondered what he meant to do. In spite of the pain, I struggled desperately to free myself.

All at once my coat gave way, and then down I plumped into the water breast deep.

A hasty glance showed me my surroundings.

In my rear the gap between the boulders was closed tightly; in front was a space that looked barely large enough to admit my body.

I was hesitating whether to make a dash for freedom or not when the tramp appeared overhead with a huge limb, intending, evidently, to poke me loose.

"Ha! saved me the trouble, did you?" he exclaimed; "now come out here with that box just as quick as you can, do you hear me? If you don't I'll finish you," he added, angrily, as I made no reply.

I was terribly scared.

In fact, had I been certain that he would do me no harm, I would probably have gone out, but the expression of his face made me believe he would kill me in order to avoid future pursuit.

The precious box was under water, and I could locate it with my foot as I moved about.

Then I heard him moving away again, and a moment later he appeared at the broad end of the passage, wading in the water.

I gave it up now, but retreated as far back as possible as he advanced, and then with a thrill of hope observed that he was unable to force his way in.

His burly form could not squeeze between the rocks. My exultation was short-lived.

After muttering savagely and making the most dreadful threats, he disappeared and made his way to the top of the rock. He had two or three stones in his hand, and these he flung down with all his might.

Two barely missed me, but the third struck me on the arm, and I cried out with pain. There was absolutely no place of refuge. I was imprisoned like a rat in a trap, at the mercy of this desperate scoundrel.

"Now will you come out?" he cried; "dive down in the water and get me that box. If you do I'll let you go without harm."

I knew the man was lying, and I determined to stay where I was at all hazards.

"No," I said; "I won't come out."

This reply made him furious.

He snatched up the pole and jammed it fiercely at me.

Luckily it missed my head, and grasping it quickly, I jerked it from his hands.

"I'll kill you as I would a rat," he roared, and then I heard him go clattering down over the rock.

I was half persuaded to rush out and try to escape but as I waded toward the entrance I saw my enemy in the shallow water a few yards below.

He was picking up rounded stones as big as my head.

I shivered, and a mist swam before my eyes. When I looked again he was wading directly toward me with five of those great missiles in his arms.

His fiendish face appeared at the entrance, and then, drawing back his right arm, he let fly the largest of the stones.

If it had struck my head, it would have brained me, but in my frantic attempt to reach the other end of the passage, I slipped into the water, and the stone passed

harmlessly over me, striking the rock with a loud crash.

As I staggered blindly to my feet, glancing through the narrow aperture I saw, a few yards up the creek, a man in high boots, with a gun over his shoulder, calmly wading the shallow water.

"Help! help! help!" I shouted, and then, as another big stone whizzed by my head, I went under headfirst.

I stayed there until my head was nearly bursting, and when I came to the top my rescuer was looking curiously through the crevice, and the miscreant had vanished.

It was the work of a moment to dive for the tin box and crawl out between the stones. The stranger turned out to be a detective officer in search of this very man, whose presence in the neighborhood had been accidentally discovered.

My hasty explanation started him at once in pursuit, but he soon discovered that he could do nothing alone, and he returned with me to Bender's mill, where a large party was speedily organized. In spite of all their efforts, however, the man was never captured. He skilfully eluded detection. For my discovery and rescue of the stolen money I received a substantial reward from the owner, but from that day I had a dread of Beaver Creek, and not even the prospect of catching more big bass could ever again lure me thither.

FROM TWO OF THE WINNERS.

Messrs. Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York.

Gentlemen: Your prize received, and I am delighted with it. This is the only contest I ever entered that has treated a person fairly, as I have often gone into such contests only to find that they were fakes. If ever another contest opens by your company I hope I may be able to enter it. Thanking you again, I remain,

Jersey City, N. J.

LUKE O'MALLEY.

Luke O'Malley was one of the lucky winners in the recent Prize Character Contest. We are glad to know you were so well pleased with your penknife, and would call your attention to the new contest now running. The new prizes are quite as valuable.

Messrs. Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York.

Gentlemen: To say that I was surprised on coming home Monday and finding a box there containing a magic lantern and outfit would be stating it mildly. I had no idea that I would be one of the prize winners in your Jesse James Contest. But I knew that you would act fairly toward anyone sending in their article to try for the prize, and would give what you promised to those who deserved it.

I have also sent in another story on Robert E. Lee, and hope I will be another winner. Thanking you for the lantern, which is a handsome one, I remain.

Richmond, Va.

EDGAR S. POORE.

We are very glad you liked the magic lantern so well. Your article is entered in the new contest. Watch for it. The prizes are fine.

All Aboard for the New Contest!



THE DEEDS OF FAMOUS MEN!



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Look up what interesting facts you can about any famous American—living or dead.

Chose anybody you please—Washington or Lincoln, Paul Revere, or General Grant, "Bob" Evans or Admiral Sampson, or anybody else you want to write about. Then sit down and write an article about him. Tell all about him, the brave deeds he did, or the famous words he uttered, etc.

All of the best articles will be published during the progress of the contest in a special department of the **JESSE JAMES WEEKLY**.

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